

[ZOKU.] SAYONARA  
**ZETSUBOU-SENSEI**  
**SEASON 2**



**LINER NOTES**

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# EPISODE 1

## PEERLESS TEA MUSHROOMS Z

Welcome to Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei Season 2! We hit the ground running with a skit featuring Nozomu as a shifty salesman, trying to entice a room full of people into buying “Peerless Tea Mushrooms Z”.

What he’s doing is called a Pyramid Scheme. It’s a fraudulent way of earning money that relies on an ever-growing number of investors who pay recruitment fees to join in on the deal (in this case, selling mushrooms). Since the mushrooms themselves have no particular sales value, the only real money being earned comes from the recruitment fees. And when the people at the bottom of the pyramid eventually run out of people to recruit, the whole thing collapses, with only the select few at the top having come away with any earnings to speak of.

By the way, Pyramid Schemes are illegal in both the US and Japan, just in case you were thinking of starting a mushroom company yourself.

## TEA MUSHROOMS

Nozomu’s special branding aside, tea mushrooms are a real thing... sort of. In the US, there’s a drink we call kombucha. It’s brewed using a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (called a SCOBY) that resembles a big flat mushroom. So it’s not a real mushroom, it just looks like one.

Confusingly, kombucha means something entirely different in Japan. Kombucha over there is tea (cha) made from kelp (kombu), and the drink we call “kombucha” is actually known as “mushroom tea” (kocha kinoko) over there. It’s unclear how the US ended up getting the names swapped around.

## NAMES AND FACES



Though the suckers - I mean, potential investors that Nozomu is trying to woo all resemble his students, the names branded on their faces are actually the names of each character's voice actor. There's:

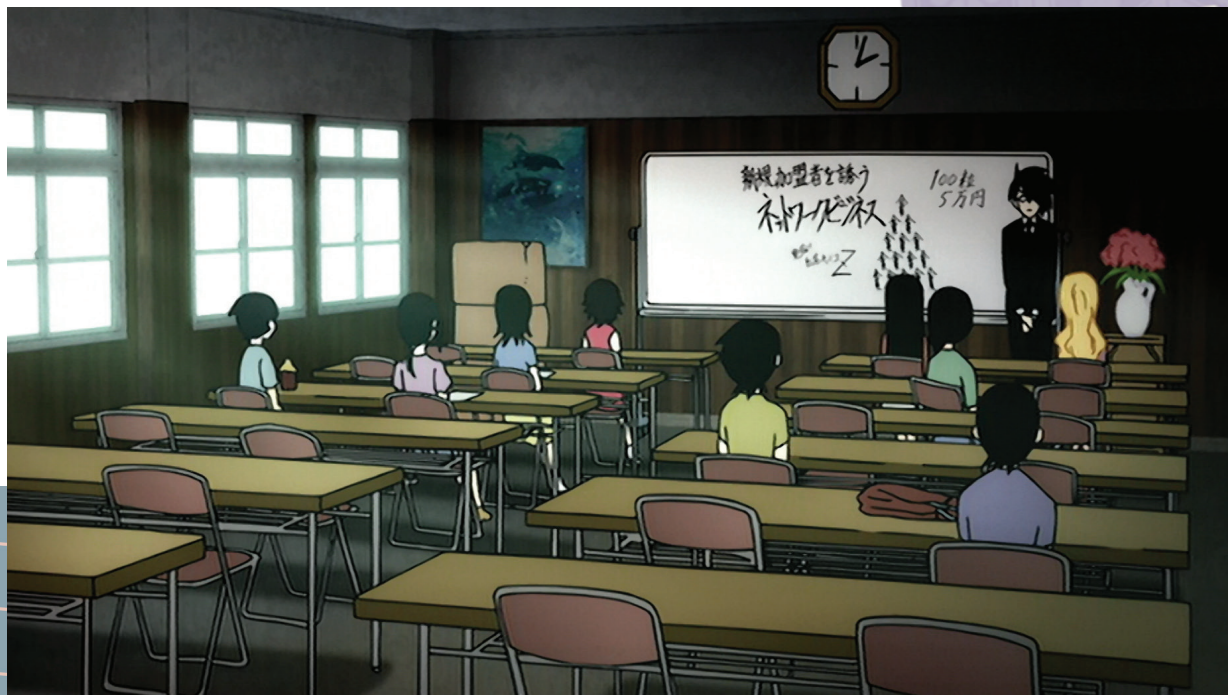
- Sawashiro, as in **Miyuki Sawashiro**, the actress for Maria
- Kobayashi, as in **Yuu Kobayashi**, the actress for Kaere
- Gotou Yuu, as in **Yuuko Gotou**, the actress for Abiru
- Yajima, as in **Akiko Yajima**, the actress for Rin
- Inoue, as in **Marina Inoue**, the actress for Chiri
- Gotou Sa, as in **Saori Gotou**, the actress for Ai
- Matsuki, as in **Miyu Matsuki**, the actress for Harumi
- Sanada, as in **Asami Sanada**, the actress for Matoi
- Tanii, as in **Asuka Tanii**, the voice of Mayo

## DOLPHINS TO THE LEFT

When we see the first wide shot of the “classroom” where Nozomu is making his sales pitch, there's a picture to the left of the whiteboard that features dolphins swimming through the ocean. This is based on a real picture by artist Christian Riese



Lassen, an artist who painted fantastical ocean seascapes that were quite popular in Japan. So popular, in fact, that they were often peddled for ludicrous amounts of money by shady art dealers in Akihabara.



## A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOOMING IN PROFUSION

This is a real four-character idiom, but the kanji are slightly off. The original is *hyakka ryouran* (百花繚乱), which means “hundreds of flowers blooming in profusion”. But here, the second kanji has been modified from 花 to 華. Both kanji can mean “flower”.

Incidentally, “*hyakka ryouran*” is also one of Setsuna’s hidden sword techniques in the *Negima!* manga by Ken Akamatsu. Those of you who read the Season 1 liner notes might remember that Kouji Kumeta, the author of *Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei*, has made it his personal mission to start friendly fights with Ken Akamatsu wherever and whenever possible.

## I'M CHARGING

Our first *Lupin*-style text for season 2 says “I’m Charging”. It’s a reference to chapter 89 of the *Zetsubou-sensei* manga, which is titled “I’m Charging, Yada-chan Said in a Low Voice”, which in turn is a reference to a novel called *Morning* by Osamu Dazai. (The original line in the novel is: “It’s a power outage, Kiku-chan said in a low voice.”)

The main joke in *Zetsubou-sensei* chapter 89 is the idea of “over-charging”: going on a long break, and coming back worse than before. For example, a band that goes on hiatus for five years, and comes back with a terrible new sound. So, applying that theory to the *Zetsubou-sensei* anime, perhaps it’s a warning from the animators to the viewers. *Zetsubou-sensei* has been on a break - will it also be “overcharged”?



## **LISTEN, THE BARON IS RANTING**

Episode 1's title is a reference to *The Surprising Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, a satirical collection of tall tales by Rudolf Erich Raspe. In Japanese, the title is *Hora Danshaku no Bouken*, where "hora" means "braggart" and "bouken" means "adventures". But for Zetsubou-sensei, the title has been twisted into *Hora, Danshaku no Bougen*, where "hora" means "listen", and "bougen" means "ranting".

Also, on every episode's title card, the number of the manga chapter that it was adapted from is listed in the upper right-hand corner. But this time, the text says "Original Volume 1 - Sleeve." Keep this in mind, it'll be important in a bit...

### **SHUUKAN SHIN-TOMO**

Right after the title card, Nozomu opens a magazine and is shocked to find a racy picture inside.

The title of the magazine is written as *Shuukan Shinchou* (週間親朝). This is a slightly altered version of the name of a real magazine, *Shuukan Shincho* (週刊新潮), which roughly translates to "Weekly New Tides". It's a weekly alternative news magazine that started in 1956, and as of this writing, is still in print today.

The thing about alternative news magazines in Japan, though, is that they almost all contain pornography. In fact, *Shukan Shincho* is one of the only alt-news magazines that only covers news. So it's seen as the more socially acceptable choice for men to read.

### **BEAUTIES OF NATURE**

This is another four-character idiom that has been changed. The original phrase for "beauties of nature" is "kachou fuugetsu", written 花鳥風月. But here, instead of starting with 花鳥, which means "flowers and birds", the kanji have been replaced with 華 and 蝶, which are two separate kanji meaning "flowers" and "butterflies".

### **YAKINIKU SPECIAL**

Yet another idiom. The text is supposed to be "jakuniku kyoushoku" (弱肉強食), which means "survival of the fittest". But the first and third kanji have been changed, turning the phrase into "yakniku teishoku" (焼肉定食), which means "Yakiniku Special". (Strangely, Nozomu isn't even eating yakiniku, which is meat served on skewers. Instead, he's eating a tempura rice bowl.)

## **ALCOHOL-FREE COFFEE SHOP VON**

This is a nod to *Wild 7*, a 1969 manga about a counter-terrorist motorcycle group made up of reformed convicts. There are seven of these brutal vigilantes in all, and their unofficial headquarters is a coffee shop named Von.

## CRYING TEARS OF BLOOD



When the strange man in sunglasses reveals that he's part of an organization called Hamasho, he holds up a mask with red tears running down its face.

This is based on the mask that Orokamen ("Idiot Mask") wears in George Akiyama's famous 1970s manga *Derorinman*. Orokamen has a black cloak with a tall collar, and his mask is a giant, smooth metal face with slits for eyes and a mouth. He often cries long streaks of blue tears that run down his face in solid lines.

### "WHAT DOES HAMASHO EVEN MEAN?"

When Nozomu is confronted about "Hamasho", he's not sure what the term refers to.

His first guess is "Hamada Shouko" (in English order, Shouko Hamada), a popular photo model who was also a TV personality. She released several CDs, and even did PR work for professional wrestling. English viewers might know her from a brief cameo appearance on a poster in a locker in the PlayStation 2 game *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*.

Nozomu's second guess is "Hamada Shougo" (in English order, Shougo Hamada), a famous singer-songwriter who made his debut in the 1970s. Though Shougo has a relatively low profile in the Japanese media, he has gained legions of fans through his many live performances, where he always wears a stylish pair of sunglasses.

Of course, both of these famous people are nicknamed "Hamasho".



## FAMILIAR FACES, PART 1

When Nozomu is accused of being an apostate, everyone notices. And we do mean everyone.

There is a shot of townspeople who have all turned their heads to face Nozomu, but their faces are stamped out with names. The names all refer to characters from *Battles Without Honor and Humanity: Final Episode*, the last film in a five-part series of movies chronicling the violent, tumultuous lives of modern-day yakuza.

The names are:

- Matsumura (Tamotsu Matsumura)
- Kaoru (Sugita Kaoru)
- Kouno (Koujirou Kouno)
- Takeda (Akira Takeda)
- Okubo (Kenichi Okubo)
- Sugita (Sugita Kaoru)
- Eri
- Eda (Shoichi Eda)
- Mitsuko
- Yamamori (Yoshio Yamamori)



## SIGNS AROUND TOWN

Behind this first batch of Hamasho devotees, there are signboards for real shops on the buildings.

To the left is Marubell Company, located in Tokyo's Asakusa ward. Ever since the early 1920s, Marubell Company has been selling "bromides" - pictures of celebrities, singers, and idols printed on bromide paper. At one point, it was such a profitable business that they published monthly best-seller charts by category.

In the middle is Jakotsuyu, a famous bathhouse in the heart of Asakusa. It's known for its convenient location, open-air sauna, and "black water" mineral baths.

And on the right, the first kanji is missing, but it's meant to say "theatre". Back in the Edo Period, kabuki theater performances were seen as immoral, and thus they were banished to the fields of Asakusa, which at the time was outside the city limits. Eventually, in the Meiji Period, kabuki regained its dignified status, but Asakusa had already been indelibly changed. The area became famous for Asakusa Rokku, a theater district full of kabuki theaters, opera houses, vaudeville shows, and more.



## FAMILIAR FACES, PART 2

Next we see a group of people at a fish market, who are also revealed to be part of Hamasho!

But before they don their masks, their faces are stamped with the names of characters from Odagiri Hotaru's manga series *The Betrayal Knows My Name*. Written in 2005, it was the story of an orphan with mysterious empathic powers.

The names are:

- Murasame (Tsukumo Murasame)
- Giou (Takashiro Giou)
- Luka (Luka Crosszeria)
- Sakurai (Yuki Sakurai)



## CATCH OF THE DAY

The banner in the background of the fish market reads “kujira-gami”, which means “whale god”. This is referring to a 1962 movie called *Whale God*, a cryptic film about a fishing village filled with brutal and mysterious characters, who are all plagued by a whale that kills anyone who tries to attack it.

## FAMILIAR FACES, PART 3



Nozomu attempts to escape by train, but the members of Hamasho are already onto him.

Before they put on their masks, the people on the train have faces stamped with the names of actors from the 2004 French film 36th Precinct. It's the story of two policemen who are vying to become the next chief of the Paris Criminal Police, while also searching for a gang of violent thieves.

The names are:

- Mylène (Mylène Demongeot)
- Gérard (Gérard Depardieu)
- Daniel (Daniel Duval)
- Roschdy (Roschdy Zem)
- Valeria (Valeria Golino)
- Francis (Francis Renaud)
- Catherine (Catherine Marchal)
- André (André Dussollier)

## WHAT IS THIS UMBRELLA FRAMES

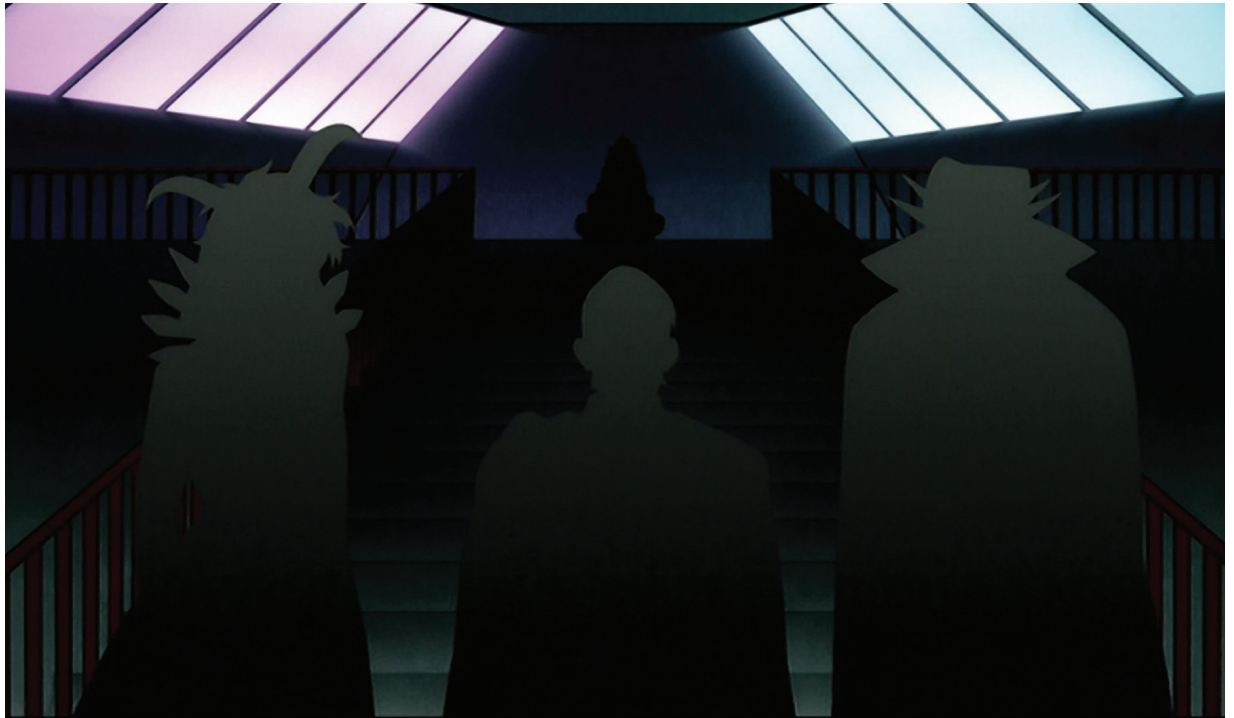


This huge billboard (that Nozomu is about to jump through) features a black-and-white picture of a man holding an umbrella. It's based on a real commercial for Ideal brand umbrellas that ran on TV back in the 1960s.

In the skit, famous comedian Hitoshi Ueki holds up an umbrella and points at it, asking, "What is this?" (Nan de aru?). Then he answers his own question: "It's Ideal!" (Idearu!)



## SHADOWY FIGURES



There are three big bosses who are very upset that their minions let Nozomu escape.

Though they're cloaked in shadow, their silhouettes give them away. On the left, it's proud Prince Heinel from Super Electromagnetic Machine Voltes V. In the middle is Planetary Robot Danguard Ace's nefarious Emperor Doppler. And to the left stands Braiking Boss, the powerful robot dictator from the Casshan series.

## SIEG HAMASHO!

Hamasho's minions all chant "Sieg Hamasho!" to show their loyalty. While this of course calls back to the real-life salute that was used in Nazi Germany, the leader's voice also sounds suspiciously like Gihren Zabi from Mobile Suit Gundam. In that series, Gihren adopted the Nazi salute and used it for his own nation, the Principality of Zeon.

## A MAN WHO RESEMBLED D\*\*WIN ZABI

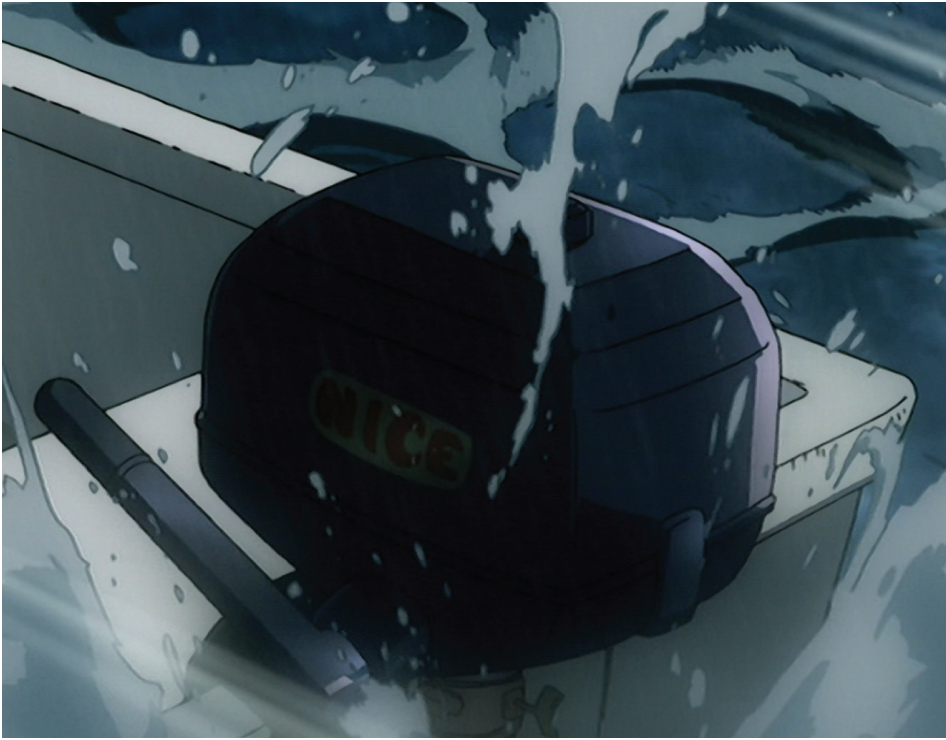
And just to drive the previous point home, we're told that Hamasho was founded by a man who resembled "D\*\*win Zabi". Filling in the censored parts gives you Degwin Zabi, Gihren's father and sovereign of the Principality of Zeon.

## NICE BOAT

The motorboat Nozomu uses to escape has the word "NICE" written on its engine.

Back in 2007, an anime called School Days was airing in Japan. It was based on a high-school romance visual novel which





became famous for its shockingly violent ending scenarios. On September 17th, the day before the last episode of the anime was set to air, a real-life violent attack occurred in Kyoto - a 16-year-old girl murdered her father. Because of this, the airing of School Days' last episode was cancelled at the last minute, and replaced with stock footage of European scenery. One of the scenes was of a ship floating down a river in Norway, and a 4-chan user posted a screenshot of it with the simple text, "Nice boat."

This spread across the internet like wildfire, both in the US and Japan. "Nice boat" turned into such a popular meme that it's since appeared in other shows like Ef: A Tale of Memories, The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya, and of course, Zetsubou-sensei.

## THE MYSTERIOUS MEMBER



Nozomu finds himself surrounded by Hamasho members, and the camera quickly zooms away. But if you look closely, one of the members is staring at you, the viewer! That stubble... those glasses... It has to be everyone's favorite art assistant, Maeda-kun!

## A SHOCKING ATTACK

The leader of Hamasho knows Nozomu's (very specific) weaknesses, and sends out an army of big-breasted women to attack him with lotus roots. These busty ladies, with their black leotards and red-and-blue face paint, are a callback to the female Shocker Combatmen from early episodes of the original Kamen Rider.

**"IF YOU'RE GOING TO AUGMENT ME, AT LEAST MAKE ME PART GRASSHOPPER OR PART BEETLE!"**

Nozomu begs to be augmented into a grasshopper or a beetle - something "with a squeaky-clean image". He's referring to heroes from Kamen Rider, a tokusatsu series that's been running since 1971. The original Kamen Rider had a helmet and armor that resembled a grasshopper, and the main character of Kamen Rider Stronger had an outfit that resembled a rhinoceros beetle.

**"AS YOU WISH! I SHALL MAKE YOU PART MOLE CRICKET!"**

The term the villain uses here is "okera", which does mean "mole-cricket". However, it can also mean "penniless". So there's a pun tucked in here about Nozomu becoming destitute.

## A WRETCHED HIVE OF SCUM AND VILLAINY



As Nozomu lies naked on the table, a group of nefarious figures looms overhead. Again, we can't see their features, but from the silhouettes, we can tell that they're all monsters from the original Kamen Rider series. From left to right, it's: Man Spider, the villain in the very first episode; Wasp Woman from episode 8 (her antennae are missing, but the saber gives it away); Scorpion Man from episode 3; Mantis Man from episode 5; and Bat Man from episode 2.



## NOZOMU'S LEFT HAND



After his augmentation, Nozomu's left hand is a big paw with three giant claws. This is a nod to Arigabari, one of Shocker's monsters in the original Kamen Rider. Arigabari was part anteater, and had a similar claw for his left hand. (So apparently, Nozomu's wish to be a bug wasn't granted.)



## CORNERED ON A CLIFF

More shadowy figures approach Nozomu as he slinks back toward the edge of a cliff. Naturally, these figures are more Kamen Rider villains - this time, from left to right, we have: Mantis Man, Bat Man, Sarracenian (a monster based on Sarracenia plants), Scorpion Man, and Tokageron (a lizard monster who used to be a soccer player).

## NOT YOUR NAKAMA



There are some characters from Eiichiro Oda's famous manga One Piece shuffled in among the pirates that capture Nozomu. The one holding swords is Zoro, the one with his foot on Nozomu is Sanji, the feminine figure in the back is Nami, Luffy is up by the mast, and Chopper's tiny silhouette can be seen off to the right.



## A DANGEROUS PLACE

Nozomu washes up at “Cape Ashi\*\*\*\*”, which is meant to be Cape Ashizuri. It’s a steep peninsula at the southernmost tip of Shikoku, and while it’s a beautiful landmark with a wide, wondrous view of the ocean, it’s also unfortunately a popular suicide spot.

## THE HOLY NOSEBLEED EMPIRE

This fake empire name is a reference (of course), but there are two parts to it.

The first reference is to a manga called *The Holy Motemote Kingdom*, by Ken Nagai. (“Motemote” means “sexy”.) It was a comedy series about an alien named Father and a boy named Onnasky, who were constantly coming up with peculiar ploys to try and pick up women.

In anime and manga, when artists want to depict a man getting aroused, it’s often portrayed with a nosebleed (their blood pressure rises so quickly that it fires like rockets out of their nose). So part of the joke here is swapping out “Motemote Kingdom” for “Nosebleed Empire”.

But that’s not all. The Japanese word for “nosebleed” is “hanaji” (鼻血), but when Chie-sensei says the name of the empire, she calls it hanaji-boo (鼻血ブー). This is where the second reference comes in.

Many of the opening songs for the *Zetsubou-sensei* series are sung by Kenji Ohtsuki, who is part of a band named Kinniku Shoujo Tai. In 1987, the band released a song called *Takagi Boo Densetsu* (“The Legend of Boo Takagi”).

There was just one problem: Boo Takagi is a real person. He’s a comedian and musician, and part of a popular band called The Drifters. Shortly after releasing *Takagi Boo Densetsu*, Kinniku Shoujo Tai received threats from Takagi’s legal representative\*, and they were forced to recall the album. So, since they couldn’t legally sing “Takagi Boo Densetsu”, they would change it slightly to “Hanaji-Boo Densetsu” whenever they performed it live.

(\* = In a bizarre twist, it was later discovered that the person claiming to be Takagi’s legal representative wasn’t actually affiliated with him at all. Kinniku Shoujo Tai eventually got personal approval from Takagi to release the song, and they re-recorded it and released it in 1989 as “Ganso Takagi Boo Densetsu”.)

## THIS CLASS HAS MANY ISSUES, THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING

This episode title is based on Kenji Miyazawa’s story “The Restaurant of Many Orders”. In the original story, two exhausted hunters are lured into a restaurant in the middle of the forest. And inside the restaurant, there’s a sign that says, “This restaurant has many orders, thank you for your understanding.” The hunters think that “many orders” refers to the restaurant’s popularity, but actually, they’re being tricked into following “many orders” (like removing their clothes and covering themselves in strange substances) so that the mysterious proprietor can devour them.

## DRINK TO YOUR HEALTH

When Nami makes her grand appearance in the classroom, there are papers to the right of the blackboard that read: “Vitamin Water contains Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, and royal jelly. With today’s hectic lifestyle in mind, it’s a beverage made for body care.” This blurb is from a commercial for Vitamin Water, a vitamin supplement drink sold by Suntory in Japan. Not to be confused with Glaceau’s Vitamin Water, which is an American drink that comes in several different flavors and colors, Suntory’s Vitamin Water is a light yellow color and has a sweet lemon flavor.

The camera leaves Nami for a few cuts, and when it returns, the papers have changed to read: “In some cases, leaves from this stone-ground tea might gather at the bottom of the bottle. Please shake before drinking.” This is a notice that’s printed on bottles of Suntory’s Iyemon brand of green tea, which is said to be crafted by “master tea blenders”.

What’s more, the frames above the blackboard now read: “Brewed with purity, this refreshing tea has a richness that comes from being crafted with nature’s fresh spring water.” Though it’s slightly changed, this is a marketing blurb from Suntory’s Iyemon Koime, a stronger version of their Iyemon tea. The real blurb is: “Brewed with pure water, this fragrant, refreshing tea has a mild richness that comes from being crafted with the fresh spring water from Yamazaki in Kyoto.”

## A JUICY SLOGAN

“100% juice, made from a blend of several varieties of grape” is the slogan for 100 Can Grape, a brand of canned grape juice from the beverage company Kagome.

## SQUEAKY CLEAN

There are two different shots where the frames above the blackboard read: “A super-refreshing sanitary wipe for all the oil and grime of where you’ve been.” This is referring to Gatsby’s Facial Paper, a disposable facial wipe that comes in several varieties. There’s “Ice Type” which contains menthol, “Moist Type” which contains hyaluronic acid, and even “Refresher Type” which has a strong minty scent.

The first time this text appears, the sign off to the right reads “Beautifully White” (“bihaku”), and the second time, the sign reads “Dark-skinned” (“iroguro”). The joke is that there would be different types of Facial Paper depending on your complexion. Just to be clear, though, this isn’t meant as a racial statement. Since as early as the 700s, the idea of having lighter skin in Japan was associated with education and high class (since such people spent a lot of time indoors), while darker skin was associated with field workers and the poor (since these people spent a lot of time outdoors, where their skin would be tanned). To some extent, this ideal of “lighter skin = beautiful” still pervades today, though some Japanese cosmetic companies have started to become more sensitive to its implications. For instance, in 2021, the Japanese cosmetics company Kao removed the word “beautifully white” from its skin products, replaced it with “brightening”, and clarified that it was to remove dark spots. Yoshihiro Murakami, one of the company’s executive officers, said: “We didn’t want our use of the term bihaku to send a message that lighter skin is better.”



## NO LITTERING ALLOWED

The text above the blackboard that starts with “Please tell us if you don’t need a shopping bag” is a common sign that you’ll see in convenience stores across Japan. It’s a way to reduce plastic use and potential littering.

## "CAN YOU TELL WHICH ONE IS SAFE TO EAT?"



As part of her little pop quiz to Nami, Maria holds up two mushrooms - a red mushroom in her right hand, and a yellow mushroom in her left.

The yellow mushroom is an *Amanita phalloides*, commonly known as the “Death Cap”. They are incredibly toxic - eating just half the cap is enough to kill a human. They’re most common in Europe, but they can be found in many places around the world.

The red mushroom is an *Amanita muscaria*, or “Fly Agaric”. These mushrooms are poisonous, but death due to eating one is very rare. Side effects are often nausea, drowsiness, sweating, and loss of equilibrium. They also have psychoactive effects, which has led to some people eating them intentionally. Of the two, this is almost certainly the mushroom that Maria and her friends ate.

## FAILED ATTEMPT

When the other students explain to Nami about Nozomu’s failed suicide attempt, the words “SUICIDE” and “FAILED ATTEMPT” flash across the screen, along with a picture of a personal computer that’s been torn apart.

The Japanese word for “suicide” is *jisatsu* (自殺), while the similar-sounding word for “self-made” is *jisaku* (自作). So apparently someone was trying to build a computer by themselves, but their attempt failed.

## THE SMALLEST OCEAN

Right before Nami's freak-out about being "normal", there's a sign to the left of the blackboard that reads: "Tears are the smallest ocean that a person can make." This is a line from the book Shuuji Terayama's *Poetry for Girls*.

Some readers might remember that name from the season 1 liner notes, but just in case: Shuuji Terayama was a highly influential poet, writer, and dramatist. He was most well-known for his countercultural, experimental works.

## YOUNG GASOGASO

The boy in Nami's example skit is reading a comic magazine called *Young Gasogaso*, which is a play on a real-life comic anthology by Square-Enix called *Young Gangan*.

The characters for "Gangan" (ガンガン) and "Gasogaso" (ガソガソ) are incredibly similar.

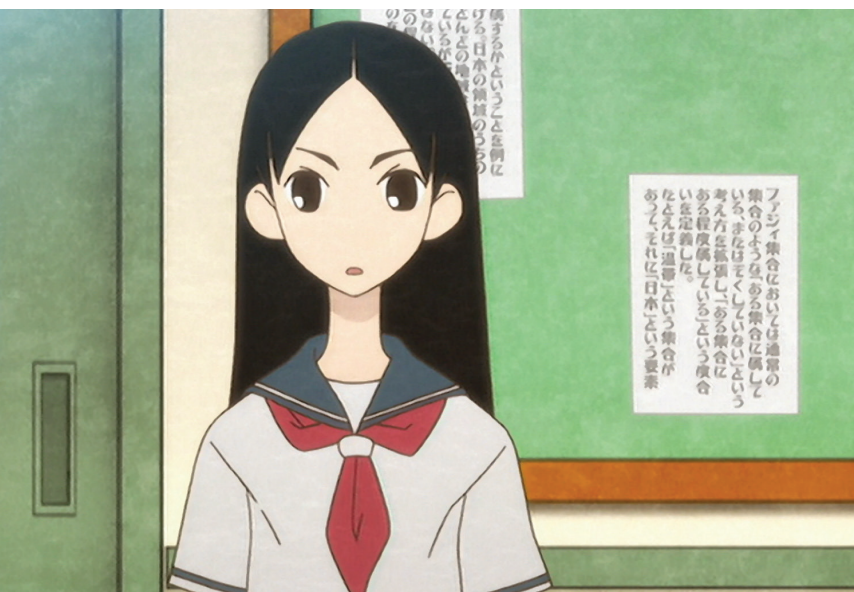
And which comic inside is so normal, you might ask? Well, Kouji Kumeta had a one-shot manga named *Igakari Neesan* ("My Big Sister is Always Picking a Fight") that ran in *Young Gangan*, so it's probably that one.

## THE NORMAL (LOCAL) TRAIN ALWAYS GETS PASSED

The local train, called *futsuu* ("normal"), is the slowest type of train you can take in Japan; not only does it stop at every station, but it will often stop and wait to let other, faster trains pass.

## NORMAL COURSES AT A TRADE SCHOOL

"Normal courses" (*futsuuka*) are more commonly known as "general education" classes in America. So if you're at a trade school to be a plumber, gen-ed requirements like Sociology or Art probably won't help you much.



## FUZZY MATH

When Chiri tells Nami that their teacher is a semi-truant, there are two pieces of paper up on the wall behind her. There's a ton of text packed in there, and it's all about the mathematical concept of fuzzy sets. The papers say:

"Regarding fuzzy sets, they expand on the idea of a normal set, where 'members either belong or do not belong.' Rather, it is defined by 'the degree to which a member belongs.' For example, in the set of 'Temperate Zones', there is the question of whether or not Japan would qualify as

a member. Most of the areas in Japanese territory would be considered temperate, however there are also some areas which do not fit this description."

It's most likely a statement about Nozomu's vague status as a sometimes-truant.





## BAD DRIVERS

The examples of driving school students who “pass no matter how dangerous they are” have the stereotypical look of yakuza members (one guy has curly hair and sunglasses, the other is a middle-aged man wearing a chain necklace). The obvious joke is using “dangerous” to refer to the men being gang members instead of them being dangerous drivers... However, it’s also a prevalent stereotype that yakuza are really bad at driving.

## FLYING TEXT

As Chiri speaks, the screen turns red and text starts zooming by from right to left. She’s talking about “Momogi Animation Academy”, which is a play on Yoyogi Animation Academy, a real-life animation school with several campuses across Japan. However, the flying text lines are all examples of why Yoyogi’s not all it’s cracked up to be:

- **You can get into the industry without a degree** - The animation industry has been understaffed for decades, so as long as you can draw well, getting a job at a small studio isn’t too difficult. However, turnover is always high.
- **You’ll get your tuition back** - In 2004, Yoyogi Animation Academy ran advertisements for their “Tuition Reimbursement System”. The claim was, if you cancelled your enrollment, all your tuition would be returned. However, this wasn’t the case; when students cancelled, they lost large amounts of money. It was bad enough that the Fair Trade Commission charged them with violating the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations.
- **Old guys with cameras coming to secretly photograph the culture festival**
- **Applying for the Civil Rehabilitation Act** - In 2006, Yoyogi Animation Academy filed for the Civil Rehabilitation Act, which is similar to bankruptcy. They claimed that student enrollment was down, which was true... However, the more pressing issue was that the previous chairman had been fired, and as an act of revenge, he took the finance books and hanko stamp (needed to make bank withdrawals) with him.
- **Comedy class established** - In 2005, Yoyogi offered a course on comedy. It was so unpopular that after one year, it was gone.
- **Voice Acting Track enrollment fee covers for other departments** - Getting into voice acting is a huge dream for many; there’s no shortage of people who want to enroll in classes for it. However, there are many other departments at Yoyogi that strug-

gle to fill seats. So the Voice Acting Track, which brings in a lot of money yet costs less to run, pays for other classes which are expensive to hold and don't bring in much revenue.

- **The Fukuoka branch has no money** - Yoyogi's Fukuoka campus hasn't been in the news for low funds, but it's worth mentioning that Zoku Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei's Co-Director Yukihiro Miyamoto, Animation Director Kazuyuki Shiotsuki, and Key Animator Miho Ayabe all went to school there. So if anyone can comment on the campus being strapped for cash, it's them.

- **Raku\*\*rou** - This is referring to San'yūtei Rakutarou, a famous rakugo comedian who was appointed Academy Director in 2006. But, due to financial difficulties, he left after only one year.

- The Fukuoka campus' student festival featured a life-sized, homemade, Styrofoam Gundam.

- **Not an accredited professional school** - Many vocational schools for the animation industry aren't accredited. However, that's not really a hurdle for getting hired after graduation.

- **Tokyo campus class size falls by half after summer vacation** - In the same way that US college class sizes fall after winter break when people decide to drop out, apparently half the people who start at Yoyogi in the spring are gone by the summer. (In Japan, school starts in the spring, so summer break marks the end of the first semester.)

## PERFECT SYMMETRY

When Chiri says that "being an ordinary truant has zero impact", there are more papers up on the wall behind her. This time, it's text from the Japanese Wikipedia entry on "Symmetry":

"Symmetry in the fine arts refers to the beauty inherent in a subject that can have a line drawn down its center, and the result is bilateral symmetry. In real life, no human being has a body that is perfectly symmetrical. Therefore, it is said that symmetry of form is an idealized style of beauty." This has a clear connection with Chiri, a girl whose hair is perfectly parted.

## BRIGHT EYES

After Chiri's introduction slate, there are posters all around the board saying things like "Removes red-eye" and "Restores eye focus and muscle control". These are all marketing blurbs for a brand of eye drops called Smile PIT. It comes in several different varieties, one of which is "Super Cool" - which, in this context, means that the drops will give cooling relief.

## "AFTER ALL, THIS CLASS HAS 31... NO, 32 HOPELESS STUDENTS!"

The class that actually has 31 students is Negima's class in Negima! Master Negi Magi.

## THE STUDENT ROSTER

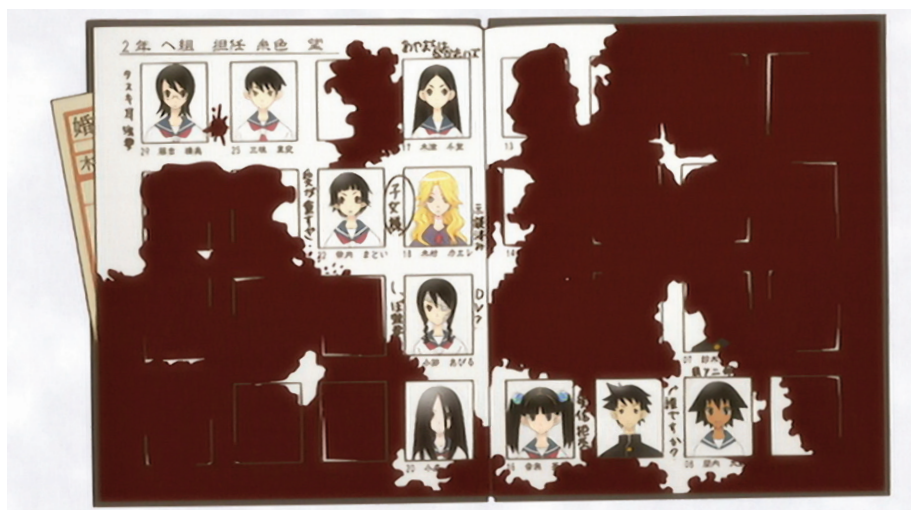
Though most of the book is covered in "not blood", we can see that Nozomu has made some notes about his students.

There's a note penciled next to Harumi that reads, "Likes tanuki ears." Above Chiri it says, "Does not tolerate mistakes." To the left of Mato is, "Her love is too heavy." Next to Kaere, it says "Settled out of court", with "REPATRIATED"



in a big circle. To the left of Abiru, it says, “Likes tails,” and on the right it says, “DV?” To Meru’s right is the sage advice, “Don’t let her have reception”, and next to Maria he asks, “Who is this?” And finally, just above Maria is the entry for Sonokou Suzuki. His picture is covered in not blood, but he’s shown up in the anime a few times - he’s the heavyset guy with thick glasses and a helmet haircut. Written underneath his name, it says, “Lives and breathes moe anime.”

Also, on the left side of the book, we can see a yellow sheet of paper that’s been stuffed between the pages... It’s a marriage registration form, most likely from Chiri.

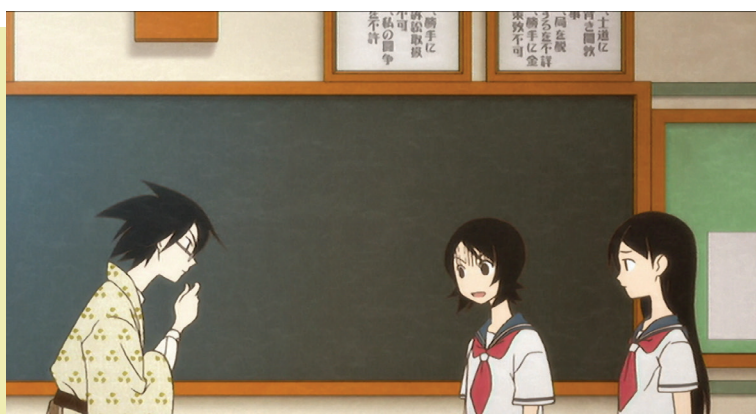


## RULES TO LIVE BY

As Nozomu is explaining about the not blood, there are two framed pictures above the blackboard. The text written inside them is the Iron Code of the Shinsengumi, five rules that all members had to follow:

1. One must always follow the samurai code
2. Once in the Shinsengumi, one must never leave it
3. One must not raise money privately
4. One must not handle other people’s litigation at one’s own discretion
5. One must not engage in personal fights

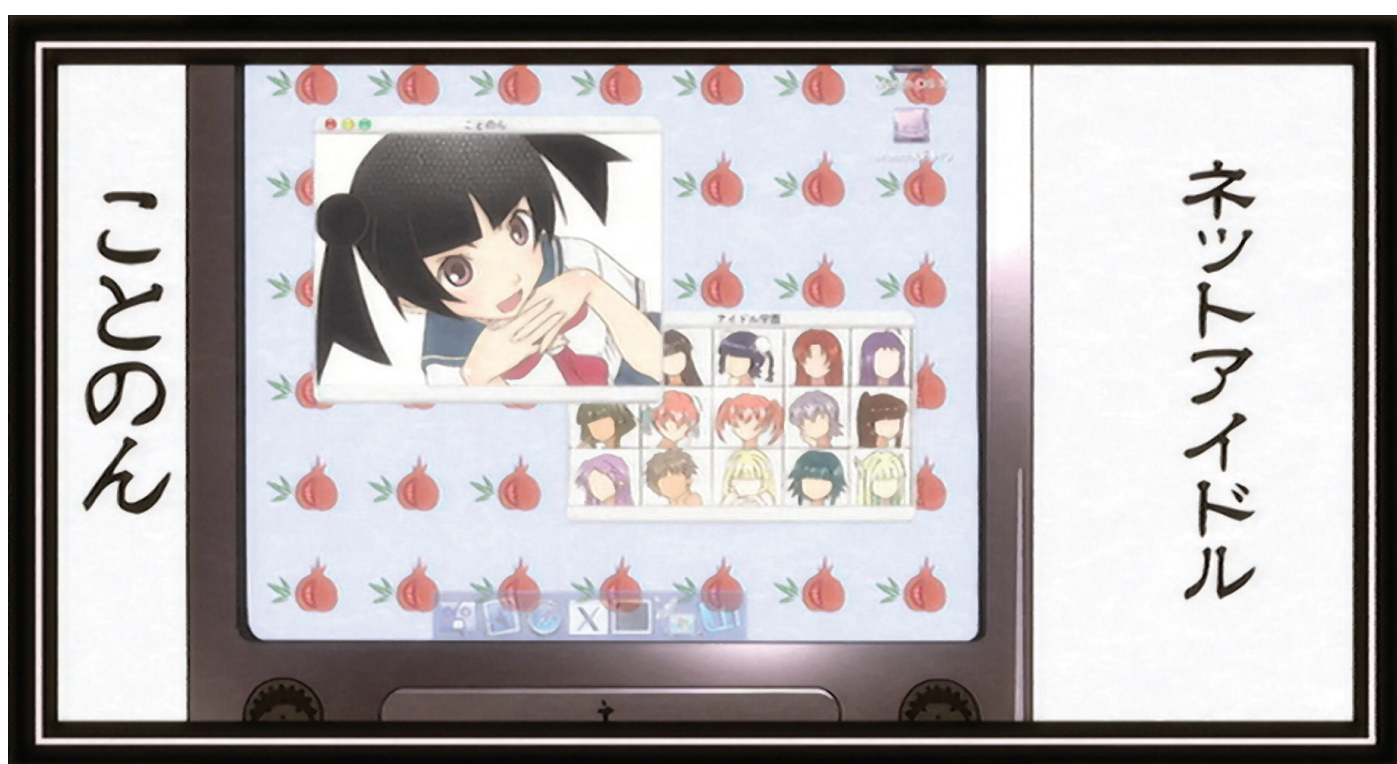
The Shinsengumi was a special police force that was founded to protect Shogunate representatives in Kyoto during the tumultuous period leading into the Meiji Era. There are no historically contemporary materials showing that the Shinsengumi followed this Iron Code, so while it’s not impossible that the rules are legit, it’s also possible that they’re a part of early Shinsengumi historical fiction.



## KOTONON'S COMPUTER

When we get a glimpse of Kotonon's computer screen, there's a window filled with pictures of other "idols" - but actually, they're all characters from Negima!? Starting from the upper left, the first row is: Konoka Konoe, Chao Lingshen, Chizuru Naba, and Yue Ayase. The second row is: Kaede Nagase, Fumika Narutaki, Fuka Narutaki, Ako Izumi, and Natsumi Murakami. And the final row is: Misa Kakizaki, Misora Kasuga, Evangeline A.K. McDowell, Akira Okouchi, and Chachamaru Karakuri.

Her computer appears to be an eMac, which was originally designed for educational use, but eventually saw release as a cheaper mass-market alternative to the iMac G4. Technically it's an Apple product, but the logo on her computer doesn't just have a bite out of it, it's been eaten all the way down to the core. And as for her apps, she has Finder, Mail, Safari, X11, the Terminal, "Hotoshop" (Zetsubou-sensei's poke at Photoshop), and Microsoft Word all within easy reach on her dock.



## WHAT'S HARUMI READING NOW?

Harumi's doujinshi this time is "Catcher in the Nose", a play on J.D. Salinger's classic *Catcher in the Rye*. The doujinshi cover features Akagi Shigeru, Iwao Washizu, Yasuoka, and Ohgi Takeshi - these are all characters from the mahjong manga Akagi, and they all have incredibly large noses.

## GENSHIKEN TWO

Genshiken is a popular manga and anime series about a college club for otaku. The club's name is Gendai Shikaku Bunka Kenkyuukai, written 現代視覚文化研究会, or 現視研 - "genshiken" - for short. However, those three kanji don't form a real word, so the title of the manga series is just written in hiragana, which is easy to read and pronounce (げんしけん). The same goes for its sequel series, Genshiken 2: げんしけん2.

But the box in Kiri's room just has to be complicated. Not only does it have "Genshiken" written on it in kanji, it uses a very formal kanji for the numeral "2", which gives us "現視研弐".



## THAT WAS TOUGH

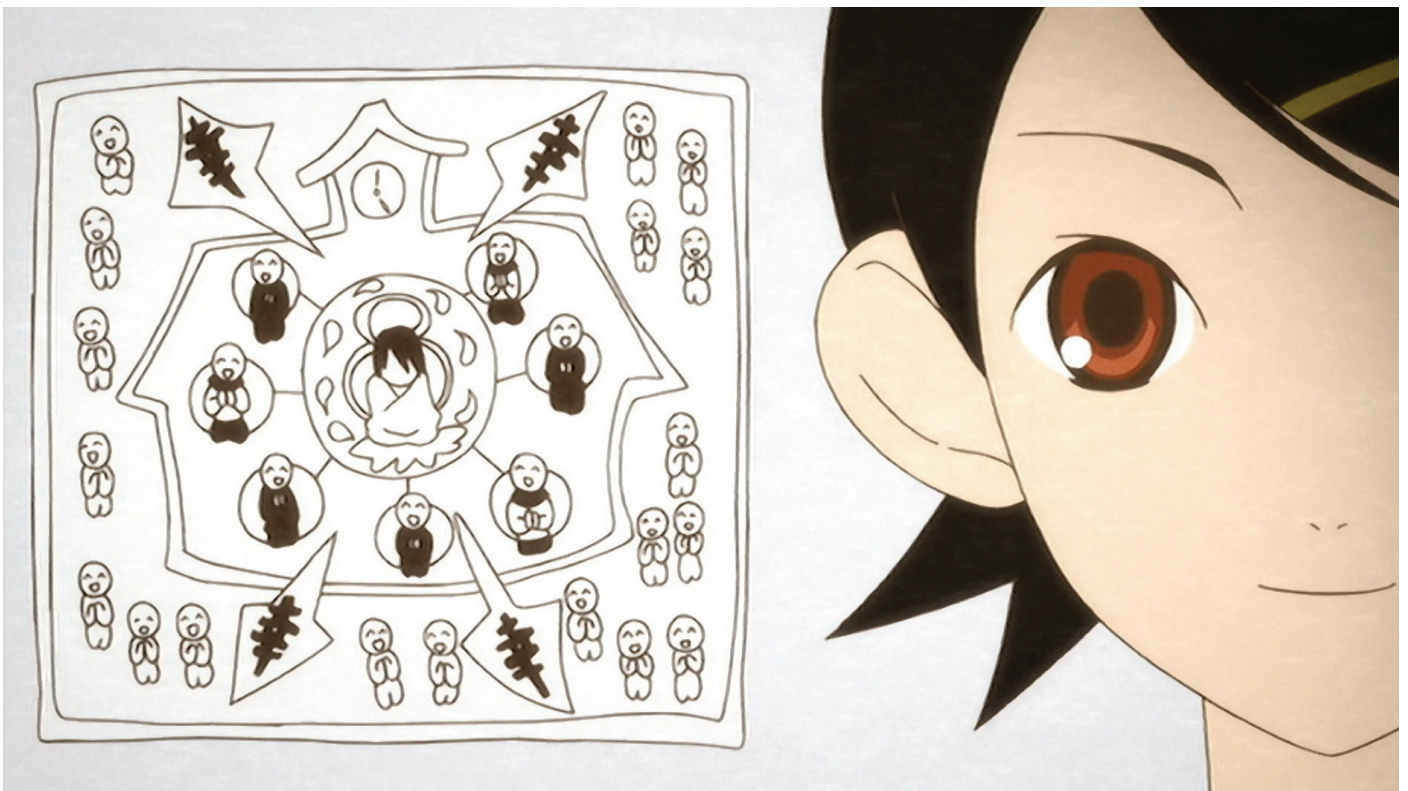
This is a message from the animators, letting us know that animating that previous shot (with the camera spinning around Nami and Nozomu) was no simple feat!

## TRÄUMEREI

Just to be clear, no, Träumerei does not have lyrics. (Especially not crazy lyrics like Kafuka's!) The song is Movement No. 7 of Kinderszenen, a 13-piece composition by Robert Schumann, written in 1838.

## KIRI'S MYSTICAL POWER

When Kafuka explains that the school is prosperous because Kiri stays in it, there's a diagram behind her to the left. It's based on the Mandala of the Two Realms, a famous pair of Japanese depictions of the Buddhist cosmos - specifically, it's based on the Womb Realm, which shows Vairocana Buddha surrounded by eight Buddhas and bodhisattvas, all within a square core, and then many deities outside the core.



In Kafuka's interpretation, Kiri has taken the place of Vairocana Buddha, and the square core has become the school building.

## "MOM!"

Nozomu's plaintive cry for his mother is a reference to a 1960s commercial for Hanamaruki Miso. In the advertisement, a little girl is playing in the fields with her dog, and as sunset approaches, she calls out for her mother. Then, once she gets home, her mother serves her up a nice tasty bowl of Hanamaruki miso soup.

## **FORGET ME NOT**

As Nami chides Nozomu for being so forgetful, there's text on the blackboard that reads: "Oh right, there was a story like that, wasn't there? I think I remember seeing it somewhere."

That's because this particular story about Nami fishing for sympathy actually happened very early in the manga; it was the tenth chapter. So this story easily could have been put into season 1... but it wasn't. This is the animators' roundabout way of saying, "Oh, was this a thing? Our bad."

## **WE'LL MAKE ANOTHER SEASON IF THIS ONE SELLS OVER 30,000 COPIES**

30,000 copies is an astronomical amount for an anime DVD to sell. So, uh... good luck!

## **DEATH COUNTRY**

In season 2 of Zetsubou-sensei, the next-episode previews are all distortions of real-life books. "Death Country" is a play on Snow Country, the classic novel written by Yasunari Kawabata. In the real book, the first line is, "The train came out of the long tunnel into the snow country", after which the main character arrives in a remote hot spring town. But here, in the next episode preview, the main character is just looping through tunnels endlessly, forever.



# EPISODE 2

## BORN THE 3RD SON OF A NAVAL FAMILY...

This episode's Lupin-style text is: "Born the 3rd son of a naval family in northern Rhode Island in 1794." This is a brief biography of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, who played a huge part in getting Japan to end its isolationist foreign policy in 1854.

At that time, trade between America and China was increasing, so American ships needed convenient coaling stations - plus, any shipwrecked Americans who washed ashore in Japan were imprisoned and executed. So, to resolve these issues, Perry was sent by President Fillmore to convince Japan to open its borders to other countries.

In Japan, only Portuguese and Dutch ships were allowed to conduct trade, and even then, they were only allowed to dock at Dejima, a small island near Nagasaki. When Perry approached with his ships, Japanese officials ordered him to dock at Nagasaki, but he flatly refused. Instead he sailed directly to Edo (Tokyo) and threatened to burn it down if they turned him away. So he was permitted to dock at Kanegawa, a port close to the capital, and deliver his official message.

This was also a time of turmoil within the Japanese government. The shogun, Tokugawa Ieyoshi, died shortly after Perry returned to the US, and his young son was sickly, so Japan's response depended upon an indecisive Council of Elders. No consensus had been reached by the time Perry returned, but his eight warships, with their advanced military technology, ended up making the Council's decision for them. After a month of negotiations, the Kanagawa Treaty was signed on March 31, 1854.

## WHEN YOU OPENED UP YOUR BANGS FOR THE FIRST TIME

This title is an homage to Touson Shimazaki, a famous writer from the early 1900s. Specifically, it's a spoof on the first line of his poem "Hatsukoi" ("First Love"): "When you swept back your bangs for the first time..."

### OPENING PORTS

The word for "opening a port" is 開港, pronounced kaikou. The pun is that the word for "opening a school", 開校, is also pronounced kaikou.

### THE OPENING OF THE STORY

Another pun. The phrase for "the first part of a story" is kaikan hekitou, written 開巻劈頭, but those first two kanji are the same kanji used in "opening a port", which is kaikou (開巻).

## "CUT AND DRIED MACKEREL?"

Another pun! Kafuka says that Perry tries to open everything... Now, the verb "to open" is hira-ku (開く). And the word for dried mackerel is aji no hiraki (鰯の開き), since drying out the fish involves cutting it down the middle, opening it up, and laying it flat. So of course, that's something Perry would do.

## "MY UNOPENED EVA-THEMED CANNED COFFEE COLLECTION!"



This is based on a real promotion. Harumi's cans say "YCC" on them, but the real coffee company is UCC, and in 1997, they released a set of coffee cans with official Evangelion artwork on them. There were six cans in total, and fans collected them all. Then UCC did it again in 2007, and given the release timing of *Zoku Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei*, those might be the cans Harumi has.

But there have since been plenty more! As of this writing, UCC has collaborated with Evangelion no less than seven times, with the latest set announced in 2020, right before *Evangelion: 3.0+1.0* was scheduled to hit Japanese theaters (though the film was ultimately delayed to 2021 due to the Coronavirus pandemic).

## RURUBU TRAVEL GUIDE ~DYING~

"Rurubu" is an actual series of travel guides published in Japan, though they've never done one about "dying". Usually they cover either specific cities (like Nagano or Hiroshima) or wide areas (like the whole southern island of Kyushu), and tell travelers all sorts of helpful information like where to get the best food and which sites are good to visit.

As for this "dying" edition of Rurubu, the cover proclaims "Welcome to Heaven", and then lists four different places: the Sea of Trees at Aokigahara, Tojinbo (a cliff in Fukui), Nishikigaura (a cliff in Shizuoka), and Kegon Falls (a waterfall in Tochigi). As you might have guessed, these are all (in)famous suicide spots.

## "PERRY-SAN THREATENED THE PRINCIPAL AND FORCED HIM TO OPEN THE POOL!"

The majority of Japanese schools have outdoor pools, which are used for PE classes and swimming clubs. However, they're not open year-round. Most often, they're opened in June, and closed in September.

This episode aired in January, which is way too early for the pool to be open. But Perry did it anyway!

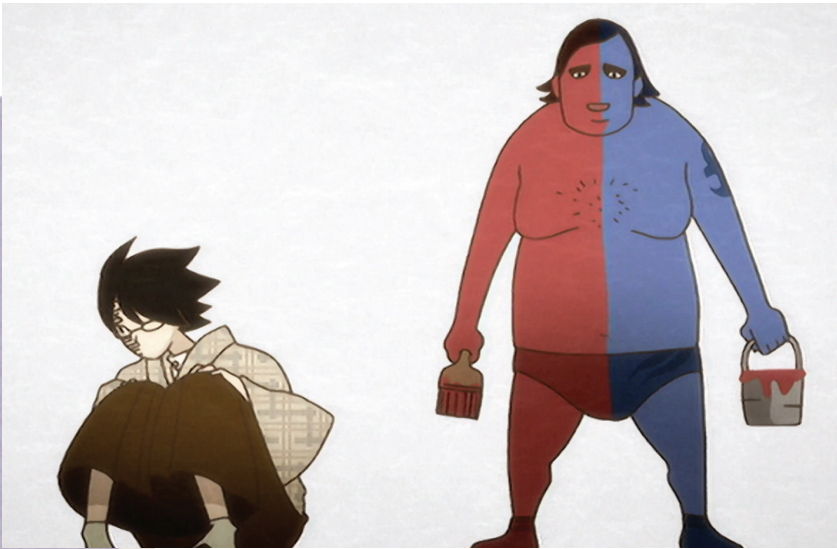


## VEXILLE

Vexille: 2077 Isolation of Japan is a CGI film that released in 2007 to lukewarm reviews. In the movie, it's the 2060s, and the UN has placed a ban on researching robotics. So Japan withdraws from international politics, reinstates its old isolationist policies, and even covers the entire country with a giant energy field, all so the Daiwa Heavy Industries Company can keep working on cybernetics. Spoilers, it doesn't work out well for anyone involved.

This extreme isolationism, then, is similar to Nozomu's "emotional closed-borders policy".

## RED AND BLUE BODY PAINT



Perry tries many things to win his way into Nozomu's heart, including painting his own body - red on the right side, and blue on the left.

This skin color scheme is the same as Gill, the main villain in the fighting game Street Fighter III. Gill is the leader of the Illuminati, and he wants to be a benevolent world leader to his subjects... but he also uses things like kidnapping, brainwashing and DNA manipulation to try and bring about his utopia.

**"I CAN GET AWAY FROM YOU WHENEVER I WANT!"**



Nozomu's pose here is based on Dio from Jojo's Bizarre Adventure. Like many of the characters from that series, Dio often strikes unique, flamboyant poses. This particular one is from season 3 where he turns menacingly to the camera and points dramatically with his left hand, while covering his face with his right.

## FREE FALLIN'

The scene where Perry is falling through a colorful dreamscape while Nozomu circles around him is reminiscent of a similar scene in the movie Urusei Yatsura 2: Beautiful Dreamer. In that film, the main character Ataru is falling through a collapsing dream, while a monk named Cherry circles around him.

## SHICOLA

After Perry wakes up, Nozomu slips him a girlie magazine called Shicola (シコラ). This is one letter off from a real girlie magazine, named Scola (スコラ).

## DO NOT OPEN

Nozomu has a whole list of things that shouldn't be opened. Most of them are self-explanatory, but here are the ones that might not be obvious:

- **Pandora's Box:** Pandora is a character from Greek mythology. In her story, there was container that she was never meant to open, but out of curiosity, she opened it anyway. Once she did, sickness, death, and evil was released into the world.

- **Trepanation:** This is an ancient surgical procedure, where holes were drilled directly into the human skull. Not recommended.

- **Electric Rice Cookers:** In the world of Akira Toriyama's Dragon Ball, there is a great sealing technique called "mafuuba" (demon sealing wave). Ideally, it's used to trap mighty demons in jars. But in the case of Master Mutaito, he ended up trapping King Piccolo in the only thing he had available: an electric rice cooker.

- **Large Wicker Baskets:** In the Japanese fable The Tongue-Cut Sparrow, a kind old man finds an injured sparrow, and nurses it back to health. His greedy wife, however, resents giving food to something as insignificant as a sparrow. Eventually, the old man is led by sparrows to a bamboo grove, and as thanks for caring for their friend, they offer him his choice of either a large wicker basket, or a small one. He chooses the small one since it will be easier to carry, and when he takes it home and opens it, it's full of beautiful treasures. On seeing this, the greedy wife runs to the bamboo grove and asks for the large wicker basket. The sparrows give it to her, but warn her not to open it until she gets home. Of course, she's much too greedy for that, and she opens it soon after leaving the grove. But instead of treasure, the basket is full of monsters, and they frighten her so much that she tumbles off a cliff to her death.

## SHIMOIGUSA STATION

This is a station on the Seibu Shinjuku line - and more importantly, it's the nearest train station to SHAFT's headquarters. No express trains stop at Shimoigusa, so if you want to visit there, you have to take a local train.

## "PERRY! PERRY! PERRY-SAN!"

When Kafuka calls out to Perry, it's a spoof on the opening to a 1966 anime called Sally the Witch. In the original opening, the cute princess Sally is flying through the sky on her broom, as children call out to her, "Sally! Sally! Sally-chan!"

## IT WOULDN'T ALL FIT, SO THE SAUCES AND TOPPINGS WERE SERVED IN SEPARATE DISHES

Our next flash of Lupin-style text is a reference to one of Japan's most beloved curry restaurants, Curry House CoCo Ichibanya.



The amount of toppings offered at CoCo are, in a word, extensive. If you order them all, it's a ridiculous amount of food. In fact, it became something of a challenge for people to order every topping and see if they could "win" by eating it all.

In a perfect example (with plenty of pictures), a brave writer for the Japanese blog Gigazine attempted this challenge back in April of 2008. With every topping applied, it ended up looking less like a plate of curry, and more like a mountain of sauces, meats, and fried food. He described the flavor as "chaotic". But in the end, he was successful! (And here's hoping he didn't get sick afterwards!)

## DECORATIVE DOLLS

This story opens with several shots of dolls in an extravagant display. This is a custom for Hinamatsuri, also known as Girls' Day or the Doll Festival. It's celebrated each year on March 3rd, to pray for the health and happiness of young girls in the coming year.

The doll display doesn't have to be nearly as fancy as the one shown in this episode, but it can be. Dolls representing the royal court are set up on a display that can have up to seven tiers. The first tier holds the Honored Palace Official and Honored Doll, which are meant to represent the Emperor and Empress. The second tier holds Three Court Ladies, who serve sake to the Emperor and Empress. The third tier has the Five Male Musicians, three of which have drums, one of which has a flute, and the last of which is a singer. On the fourth tier are the Minister of the Right and Minister of the Left, bodyguards for the Emperor. The fifth tier has three Helpers who also protect the Emperor and Empress. And then, if there are sixth and seven tiers, they hold various court paraphernalia like ox-drawn carriages, boxes of food, and items for a tea ceremony.

## HER PHONE MUST BE HEAVY



Nozomu holds up Meru's phone charms as an example of "excessive decoration". Taking a look, most of them are references to people and animals that have popped up in the series before:

- Up top, closest to the phone, is Tarou Asou. He was the Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2007, and otaku cheered him for his stance on using manga to build bridges between cultures.

- Right below him is a stork carrying a baby. In the Zetsubou-sensei manga, Mikoto lied to Majiru and told him that babies are delivered by storks; so now, in both the anime and the manga, storks can often be seen flying through the sky.

- Next to the stork is the Emperor Penguin, the odd ying-yang symbol that's been in Zetsubou-sensei since the beginning.

- Below the Emperor Penguin is a blue eye with a teardrop coming out of it. This is a symbol used to poke fun at an anti-piracy campaign run by Japanese movie studios. In the PSA, which ran in

theaters in the mid-2000s, a woman cries a single black tear. It slowly runs down her face, then drops into a pool of black water and morphs into a skull. That's quite the way to say, "Please don't record this movie with a Handycam"!

- Behind the eye is Yoshiko Sakurai, the Japanese journalist whose image showed up several times in season 1.
- To Sakurai's right is that poor dog with the stick up its bum.
- The biggest charm, the one at the bottom, is a caricature of Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan.

## ***I'M GONNA MELT YOU ALL THE WAY DOWN***

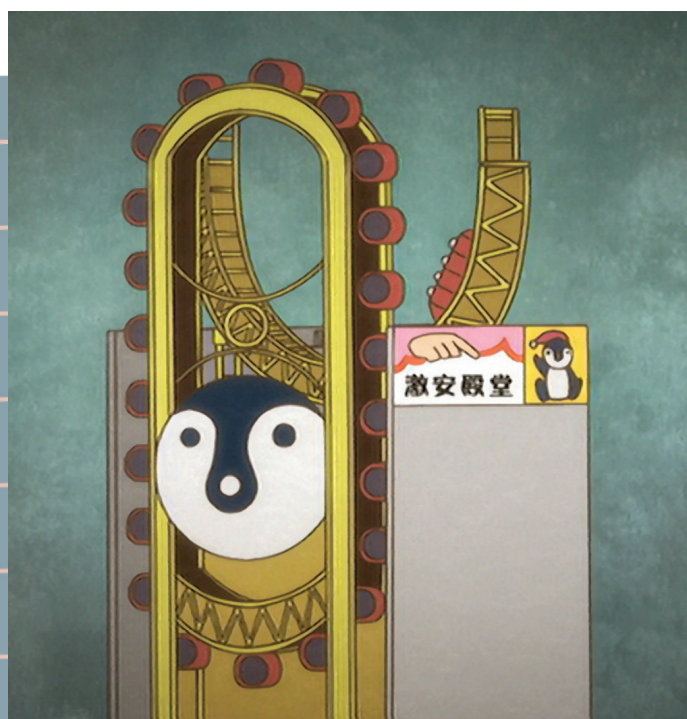
The phrase being used here for "melt all the way down" is tsukashi tsukushite. It's a bit of a tongue twister, but its real claim to internet fame came when it was used in an IDOLM@STER song called "The Agent Comes at Night". When the twin sisters Ami and Mami sang the song, they couldn't pronounce that phrase correctly, and it sounded like "tokachi tsukuchite" - which would be a cutesy way to say, "You melt (the region of) Tokachi all the way down." Many memes ensued.

## ***THEIR HAIR AND SKIN ARE COVERED IN SCREENTONE***

Screentone, in the context of manga, is a time-saving technique for shading that involves using pre-created patterns and textures. With manga drawn on paper, like Harumi's manuscript here, screentones are applied using semi-transparent film with an adhesive backing. Screentone is a great tool, and pretty much every manga artist uses it - but it needs to be used sparingly, or the final manga image tends to look overdone and flat.

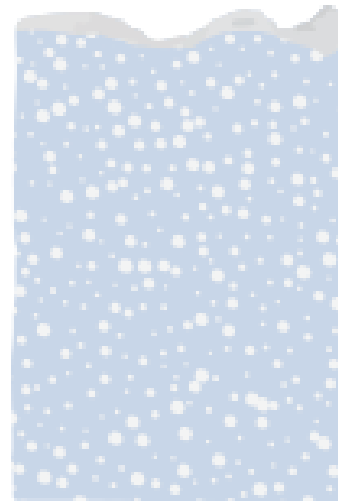
## ***DO THEY THINK THEY'RE MADAME DE POMPADOUR?"***

Madame de Pompadour (real name Jeanne Antoinette Poisson) was born in 1721. She was a member of the French court, and the chief mistress of King Louis XV. When it came to things like art and architecture, she had well-known fondness for the Rococo style, which involves extravagant amounts of detail and decoration.



## ***"AMUSEMENT PARKS ON TOP OF DISCOUNT STORES!"***

This is a poke at Don Quixote, which is a discount shop in Japan. The image is a mix between their Osaka location and their Roppongi location... The Osaka location has a giant ovular Ferris Wheel on the front of its building, the only one of its kind in the world. It was built in 2005, then shut down due to mechanical problems in 2008; but ten years later, the ride was reopened and, as of this writing, is still in operation. As for the Roppongi location, it has - or rather, had - a yellow u-shaped rollercoaster installed on the roof. It was constructed in 2006, but due to noise concerns from neighboring buildings, the ride was never actually used, and has since been removed.





## **"CARS WITH DOLLS FROM UFO CATCHER GAMES IN THE BACK WINDOWS!"**

Those who grew up watching Disney movies probably won't need this explained to them, but: the dolls in the window are the seven dwarves from Walt Disney's 1937 classic *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*.

## **"ANTONI GAUDI'S ARCHITECTURE!"**

Antoni Gaudí was a Catalan architect who lived in the 19th century. His most famous work is the *Basilica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família* (The Basilica of the Holy Family), a church in Barcelona, Spain. Work on the basilica began in 1882, but when Gaudí assumed responsibility for its construction in 1883, he made radical changes to its design. The final design calls for eighteen towers, covered in natural shapes and textures: twelve for the apostles, four for the evangelists, one for the Virgin Mary, and a central tower to honor Jesus. On the inside, all the columns are designed to resemble towering trees with extended branches. The design is so extravagant that unfortunately, Gaudí did not live to see its completion. In fact, when he died in 1926, the basilica was only around 20 percent complete. Many other artists have stepped in over the years to aid in its construction, but as of this writing, it has yet to be finished. Currently, it's estimated that the basilica will be complete in 2026.

## **"THEY'RE ALL EXAMPLES OF NEIGHBORHOOD ART NOUVEAU ROOTED IN JAPONISME!"**

Kafuka's explanation is starting to unravel at this point, but to help explain the terms, "Art Nouveau" is an artistic style from the late 1800s that wanted to break down the old distinction between fine art and applied art. Art Nouveau led to nature-inspired designs in interior design, furniture, glasswork, ceramics, jewelry - anything that had a functional use could now also be made to be beautiful.

"Japonisme", meanwhile, is a term for the Japanese art craze that swept the world after Japan reopened its borders in the 1850s. The brilliant colors and stylization of Japanese art affected almost every aspect of Western design, from paintings to clothing, and even things like landscaping and architecture.

## **RED AND WHITE STRIPES FOREVER**

As Kafuka leads everyone out to search for their neighborhood's "style masters", there's a quick cut to a picture of a man in a red-and-white striped shirt, standing on top of a red-and-white striped house. That's Kazuo Umezu, the renowned manga author. Though his specialty is horror manga like *The Drifting Classroom*, Umezu has also had hits in other genres, like his comedy manga *Makoto-chan*.

Unlike some manga authors who tend to be reclusive, Umezu has always been an outgoing guy with a standout personality. He makes regular TV appearances, always in a red-and-white striped shirt. He even



painted the outside of his house in giant red and white stripes! This didn't sit so well with his neighbors who actually sued him over it; but in 2009, Umezu won the suit, so the candy cane stripes are still there to this day.

Also, if you look closely at Umezu there on the roof of his house, he's holding out his left hand, with his middle and pinky fingers folded down. That's called "gwashi", and it's a trademark hand sign from his Makoto-chan manga.

## **RITZY ROYALS**

Next, we're shown a quick flash of a building that's artistically obscured. But upon closer inspection, we can see that it's the Palace of Versailles, a royal residence built in the 1600s by King Louis XIV. Though it started out as a simple hunting lodge west of Paris, by the year 1715, it had been expanded into a full-blown palace. It was once considered the center of French art and culture, and as such, it was absolutely opulent. Walls, floors, and ceilings were all covered in paintings, textures, and patterns. Rooms were filled with exquisitely carved furniture. Every part of the palace was dripping with wealth and overabundance.

Nowadays, the Palace of Versailles is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is open to tourists as a French history museum.

## **SNAZZY SHRINES**

The next quick picture is of the Yomeimon Gate at Nikkou Toshou-gu, which is a shrine dedicated to Tokugawa Ieyasu. It's the most detailed shrine ever built; it took 4.5 million artists and craftsmen 17 months to complete. The Yomeimon Gate itself is covered in 508 sculptures of animals, both real and mythological: dragons, horse-dragons, lions, elephants, phoenixes, and more. There are also statues of people from Chinese legends, along with historical figures from Japan.

## **OPULENT OFFICES**

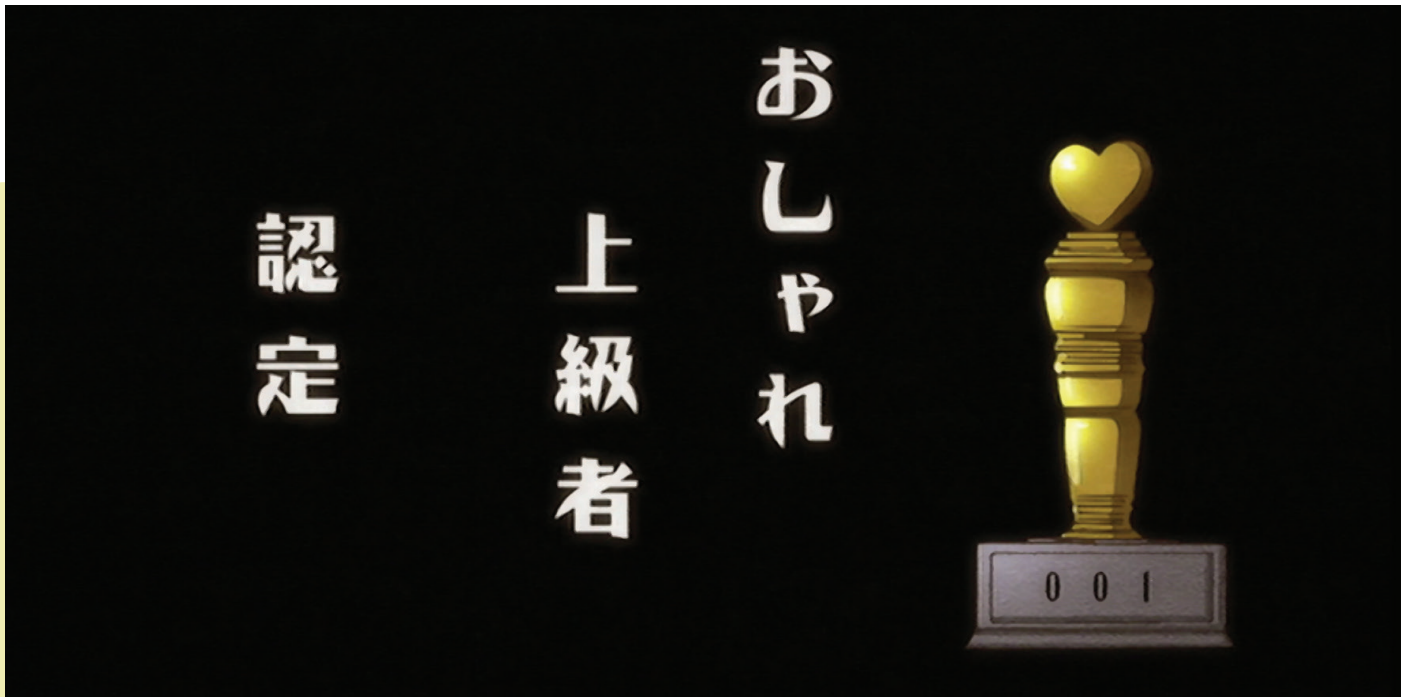
The next shot we see is of the Meiji Seimei Kan ("Meiji Life Building") in Tokyo. It's one of the first Western-style buildings that was completely designed and crafted by Japanese artists after the country was reopened. Made in the Greek Revival style, its façade is covered in enormous five-story-tall Corinthian pillars. The inside is also a feast for the eyes, featuring acanthus-leaf carvings in the ceilings and parquet wood on the floors.

## **CLASSIC CATHEDRALS**

And finally, we're shown a picture of the Cologne Cathedral in Germany. Construction on it was started in 1248 and finished in 1880, a difference of 632 years. It's the tallest twin-spired church in the world, and a marvel of Gothic architecture, with its 142-foot high ceiling and 90,000 feet of stained glass. Filled with carvings, sculptures, relics, and gilded shrines, it's no wonder why over 100 craftsman work full-time at the cathedral to tend to the building's upkeep.



## TROPHY WINNERS



Every time Kafuka declares someone a “Certified Style Master”, the shot cuts away to a gold trophy with a number on the base and a heart on top. This is a spoof on commercials for Sapporo’s Draft One, which is a type of beer made with pea protein instead of malt. In the commercials, the prince of the Duchy of Draft One has set off to discover foods that go well with Draft One. When he finds one - gyoza, for example - a golden trophy just like Kafuka’s (except with a star at the top instead of a heart) is awarded to the food in question.

## COCCO ZEROBANYA

This is a spoof on the popular curry restaurant mentioned earlier, CoCo Ichibanya. “Ichibanya” means “number one store”, so “zerobanya” would mean “number zero store”. It’s up to you to decide whether that’s better or worse.

## "MA'AM, LET'S HAVE A LIVELY CHAT ABOUT SYLVANIAN FAMILIES SOMETIME, OKAY?"

“Sylvanian Families” is a toy line released by the Japanese company Epoch back in the mid-1980s. It’s little fuzzy figurines of anthropomorphic animals, who come with all sorts of dresses, dollhouses, and playsets. Imagine cute little cats, bunnies, and bears wearing colorful hand-sewn sweaters and drinking tea around a tiny doily-covered table, and you’ve got the idea.

Sylvanian Families were (and still are!) incredibly popular, both in Japan and around the world. The toy company Tomy handles distribution in the US and Canada, but due to licensing problems, they lost the rights to the name “Sylvanian Families” in 1993. Nowadays, they’re known here under the name “Calico Critters”.

## "SIGNS PLASTERED ALL OVER THE SHELVES AT VIDEO GAME STORES!"

Video game stores in Japan are very busy places, visually speaking. There’s a lot to take in, including tons of signage. Most of the signs in Kafuka’s example are self-explanatory, but here

are the ones that might need a bit of explanation:

- **No clue when more Wi will arrive:** When Nintendo launched their Wii video game console at the end of 2006, most people knew it would be popular. But no one - not even Nintendo - was prepared for how popular it would become. Supply just could not keep up with demand. No matter where you lived in the world, finding one on store shelves was like winning the lottery. It took over two and a half years for retailers like GameStop to announce that shortages were coming to an end. By that point, the Wii had already sold 50 million units. In the end, it would sell over 100 million, making it one of the best-selling consoles of all time.

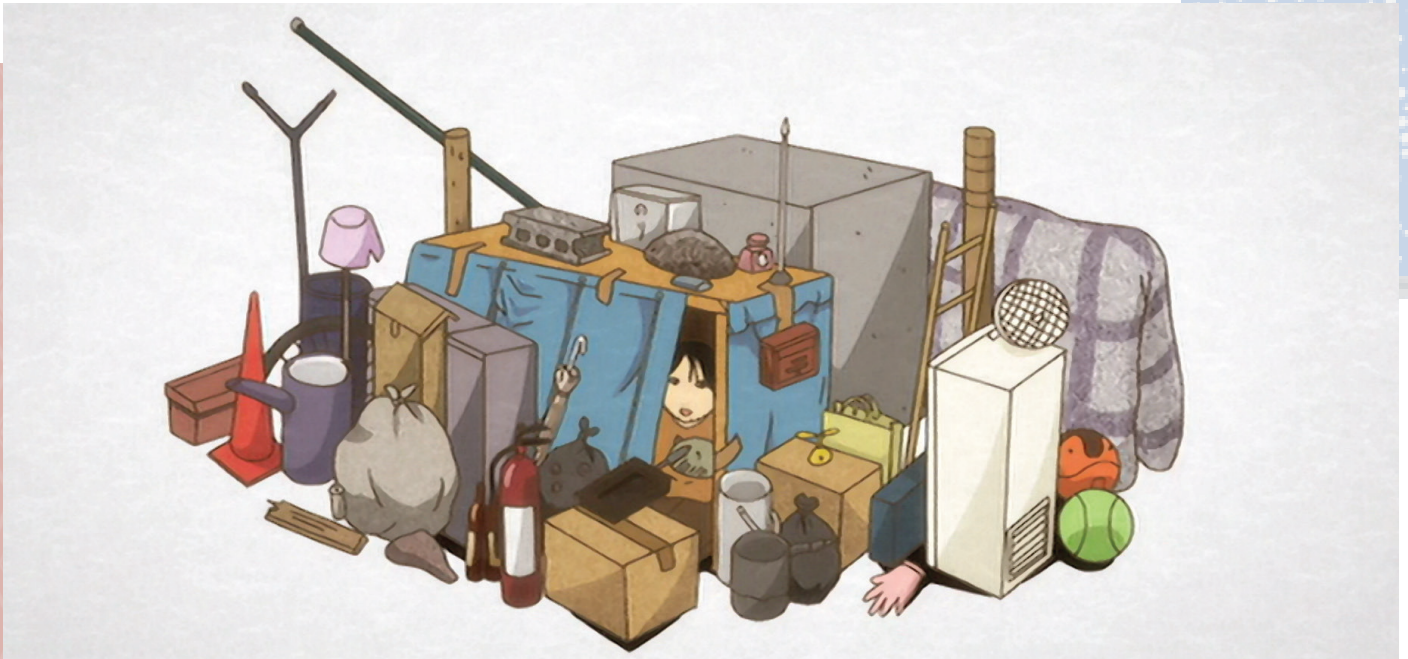
- **What selling should be like:** Meanwhile, Sony also launched their new console, the PlayStation 3, at the end of 2006. However, while Sony claimed they would have 100,000 consoles available at launch, the real number ended up being 80,000. To deal with lower-than-expected shipment numbers, some stores sold their consoles via lottery system. But other places, like the Bic Camera in Tokyo's Yurakucho ward, were "first come first served". A news report at the event showed hundreds of people restlessly pushing and shoving while store clerks tried to keep the crowd contained with rope barriers and megaphones. One man, twisted up against the rope and being pushed from all sides, shouted out, "This isn't what selling should be like!" The Internet took his plea and ran with it, turning it into a popular meme.

- **Fire sale on PS3s:** Even though people crowded into stores for the PS3 at its launch, demand for the console quickly died down. The console's high price, combined with strong competition from Microsoft's Xbox 360 and Nintendo's Wii, left the PS3 languishing on shelves. Though Sony was able to turn things around somewhat with the release of PS3 Slim models in 2009, in the end, the PS3 would be Sony's worst-performing home console to date.

One more thing to mention is that all the games on the shelf are Nintendo DS games. The DS was Nintendo's handheld game system that they released in 2004. While it had a slow start sales-wise, it was soon climbing up the charts at breakneck speed. By 2008, when this episode released, it was selling roughly 5 million units per month. As the Nintendo DS became more popular, more games for the system were released, and store shelves started to look like what you see here. Some of the (fake) games on this shelf are:

- Drain Training! DS (a play on the real game Dr. Kawashi-ma's Complete Brain Training)
- Higurashi DS (based on the game Higurashi When They Cry, which actually did get story expansions on the DS)
- Pro Baseball DS
- Big Sister DS
- Ef DS (based on the game Ef: A Fairy Tale of the Two)
- Precure DS (the long-running anime PreCure has had several DS games)
- Busty Boy DS (this will come up again in a later episode)





The homeless “Style Master” that Kafuka introduces has a lot of stuff - including a refrigerator with an arm sticking out of it. This is most likely a reference to episode 23 of the anime version of *Higurashi When They Cry*, where a certain character meets an untimely end, and the body is stuffed in a refrigerator in a garbage dump.

## BONUS ITEMS

Harumi gives the example of “A DVD set with so many bonus items that you can’t tell what the main part of it is”. The picture is supposedly a set for *Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei*, but in reality, the Japanese DVD release of *Zetsubou-sensei* didn’t have that many extras. Each disc came with a special digipak, an art card, and some *karuta* cards.

## SPLENDIFEROUS STYLE MASTERS

When Kafuka’s list appears on screen, it’s pretty clear why most of the items are there. But some have their names hidden, so here are a few explanations:

- **Miniskirts on the Red & White Show:** The “Red & White Show” is NHK’s annual New Year’s music program, *Kouhaku Uta Gassen*. The year’s most popular artists are invited to compete on the show, where they’re divided into the Red Team and the White Team. All the artists perform, and then the audience and a panel of judges vote to decide the winning team. It’s a family show, and was once the most-watched show on Japanese TV... so wearing skimpy clothes is kind of a tacky way to try and swing the vote.

- **Swaro\*ski Cell Phone Cases:** The censored word is meant to be “Swarovski”, a famous Austrian glass company. The company is known for its beautiful (but delicate!) products like crystal, jewelry, and chandeliers. “Swarovski phone case” is almost an oxymoron.

- **Sh\*\*en Maga\*ine’s Homepage:** This is meant to be “Shounen Magazine’s Homepage”. The *Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei* manga ran in *Weekly Shounen Magazine* - and apparently, in 2007/8, their homepage was a mess.

• **The Flyers' Seven Different Uniforms:** "The Flyers" refers to the Nittaku Home Flyers, a Japanese baseball team that existed for exactly one year, in 1973. In an attempt to draw attention to the team, the owner designed no less than seven different uniforms with all sorts of varied colors and markings. The initial idea was that each position would wear a different uniform... but then what would happen when a player switched positions? Unfortunately, the fashion show was not enough to save the Flyers. They were sold to the Nippon Ham company and became the team that's known today as the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters.

• **Japanese Dresses in D\*or's Paris Collection:** Dior is a famous French fashion company. In 2007, their Spring-Summer collection was displayed in Paris, and it was a loud fusion of peplum suits and origami shapes. Models with their faces painted like geisha wore bright pink kimono-esque dresses and neon green coolie hats. If you ever saw someone walking down the street wearing those clothes, you would definitely look twice.

• **Gu\*dam Astray Gold Frame Amatsu:** This is obviously the Gundam Astray Gold Frame Amatsu, a mobile suit from the manga series Mobile Suit Gundam SEED Astray. It's piloted by the series' main antagonist, and as such it has a complicated design full of black, gold, and red plating. It also has the Blitz Gundam's severed right arm grafted onto it.

• **Yuna's Costumes:** Yuna is a character who first appeared in the video game Final Fantasy X. In that game, she was a soft-spoken summoner in a long dress similar to a kimono. In the game's sequel, Final Fantasy X-2, she was an outspoken pop star who changed into various wild costumes every time she changed jobs.

• **School uniforms in SoreChiru:** "SoreChiru" is short for Sore wa Maichiru Sakura no Yuni ("Cherry Petals Fall Like Teardrops"), an adult visual novel released in 2002. The girls in the game wear school uniforms, but unlike most uniforms which use solid, muted colors, these girls have short skirts and coats with eye-popping vertical red and white candy stripes.

• **Ancient Sea Monster \*aran:** The name here is "Garan", a giant monster from the TV Series Ultraman Ace. He has wide, spiky hands and a pointy head that looks vaguely like the back end of a submarine. Apparently he's one of the only monsters that wasn't designed by the show's lead designer, Akihiro Iguchi. Instead, Garan was drawn by a 21-year-old dentist from Osaka, who submitted his design to the production studio. Iguchi made some tweaks to it, and the rest is history.

• **Hino\*\*\*\* Driving School:** This is meant to be Hinomaru Driving School, a real-life building in Tokyo's Meguro ward. In the US, most drivers won't pay much of anything to learn to drive and get a license; but in Japan, potential drivers will pay north of \$3000 to attend driving school. Learning to drive is big business, and the owners of Hinomaru Driving School apparently put their money into designing their building. It's a bit hard to describe, but the school looks like a triangular slice of pie with an enormous, red, five-story tall dodgeball wedged into it. (It's most likely meant to invoke the national flag of Japan, but...)

• **\*\*yama Technical College:** If the Hinomaru Driving School was hard to describe, the Aoyama Technical College is almost impossible. Nestled among very normal offices and apartment buildings, the Aoyama Technical College looks like a building being devoured by a huge robot/insect/lawnmower. The architect, Makato Sei Watanabe, described his design as follows: "Architecture ought to be something capable of moving people's hearts and giving them a physical thrill in a way possible in no other art. ... Another purpose of this build-



ing is to assure that anyone who might see it experiences, both mentally and physically, a definitive feeling of excitement.”

- **Prof. Kawa\*\*\*\*’s sour face:** This is “Professor Kawashima”, the neuroscientist who helped develop the Brain Age series of games on the Nintendo DS. The Brain Age games used a low-poly version of Kawashima’s face as the “mascot” character who would lead the player through different puzzles and tests. He had a wide variety of expressions, some more extreme than others; one of them involved puckering his lips as though he just bit into a whole lemon, and shaking until his glasses fell down his nose.

- **Manga volumes that come with picross\*:** The last word here is “picross”, a type of logic puzzle where cells in a grid are filled in to create a picture. Some manga include these picture puzzles in their tankoubon releases, which is rather extra for an extra.

***“ANY PART THAT DOESN’T HAVE WRITING ON IT WILL BE RIPPED OFF BY SPIRITS.”***



Poor Nozomu is going through a recreation of a Japanese folk story called “The Tale of Hoichi the Earless”. In the tale, a blind minstrel named Hoichi is approached late at night by a mysterious samurai. The swordsman asks the minstrel to come play for his lord, and Hoichi agrees. The audience loves his performance, so the samurai asks Hoichi to return the next night, and instructs him not to tell anyone about it.

But that next night, Hoichi is found playing his lute in the temple graveyard. It turns out that the samurai is a ghost, and poor blind Hoichi has been bewitched. Hoichi’s friend, the temple priest, comes up with a plan to save him: he paints the Heart Sutra over Hoichi’s entire body, and tells him to stay quiet when the samurai arrives again.

Once more, the samurai comes for Hoichi, but the writing all over Hoichi’s body has turned him invisible. All the samurai can see are Hoichi’s ears, which the priest had neglected to paint. Angered by Hoichi’s “disappearance”, the ghost rips the ears off Hoichi’s head, and leaves. Hoichi is scarred, but free from the spirit’s power.

As for Nozomu, while he got to keep his ears, it looks like he forgot to write the sutra on his glasses - they’re missing in the next scene.

## BEST AMONG FLOWERS IS THE CHERRY BLOSSOM...

Our third set of Lupin-style text is a poem that's generally attributed to Soujun Ikkyu, an eccentric monk from the 14th century. He wrote many poems, but this particular one was immortalized in *The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, a famous Japanese play written in 1748. It eventually became a proverb: "Best among flowers is the cherry blossom, best among men is the samurai" is a way of saying that "the most beautiful things in life are transient" (cherry blossoms fall, a warrior's life ends).

## ROUSE UP, O YOUNG MEN OF THE OLD AGE!

This title is a reference to Kenzaburo Oe's semi-autographical novel, *Rouse Up O Young Men of the New Age!* It's about his experiences living with and caring for his mentally handicapped son.

## "I WRITE LOVE LETTERS USING THE OLD STYLE!"

This letter says "I really love your skin", which sounds weird until you realize that it's from an old commercial for skin cream.

In 2005, South Korean actor Jang Dong-gun appeared in a commercial for the mail-order cosmetics company OZIO. He was wearing a white shirt, standing on a seashore, and shouting out the lines you see in this letter. However, though Jang spoke Japanese in the commercial, it obviously wasn't his first language.

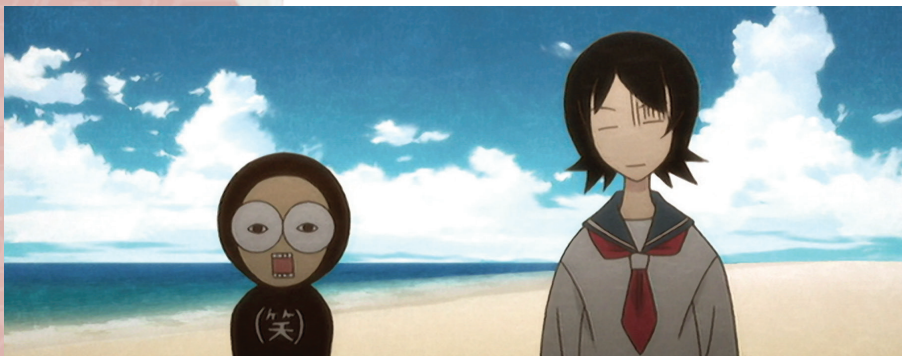
This led to a lot of jokes, and this letter here is no exception - it's written strangely, using a mix of katakana, old kanji, and obsolete hiragana. For example, one of the lines from the commercial is "Never change". In Japanese, that's "Itsumademo kawaranaide", written いつまでも変わらないで. However, in the letter, it's written like this: イツ迄モ變ハラナキデ. It's just a subtle way of poking fun at Jang Dong-gun's accent.

## "I WALK DOWN THE OLD TOKAIDO ROAD!"

The Tokaido Road was the main thoroughfare between Edo (modern-day Tokyo) and Kyoto back during the Edo period. It was one of five major routes that Tokugawa Ieyasu built to connect the capital with other areas of the country.

The Old Tokaido Road has long since been replaced by National Route 1, a highway for motor vehicles. But you can still hike along parts of the Old Tokaido Road as a tourist, and visit some shrines along the way. We don't recommend walking the whole thing, though - it would take roughly 21 days.

## "WHAT'S WITH THEM?"



There's a little gremlin next to Nami as she says this - it's Chitan Tsubouchi, the kid with the big glasses from *Katte ni Kaizou*. He's wearing his LOL Suit from chapter 153.



## KEN'OU UNIVERSITY

The kanji on this sign is 権応大学, which can be read “Ken’ou University”. But if you remove one little radical from the first kanji, you get 椎応大学 (“Shiyou University”), which is the name of the school in Genshiken.

## OLD LI\*\*DOOR

This bullet on the “Old List” is meant to say Old Livedoor, in reference to the web portal and blog platform Livedoor. Livedoor was a hugely successful business, but in 2006, it all came crashing down when company executives were convicted of securities laws violations and manipulating account information. The company itself survived, but only as a holdings company. By 2010, it was sold outright to the South Korean company named NHN.

## BATSU & TERRY

Another bullet on the “Old List”, Batsu & Terry is a manga that ran in Weekly Shounen Magazine back in 1982. It was about two high school baseball players who weren’t afraid to pick a fight with anyone, even their teachers. The manga was so popular that it won a Kodansha Manga Award under the Shounen category in 1984.

## “ANYWAY, I SHALL STRIVE TO REVIVE THE OLD.”

As Nozomu’s old friend says this, three images flash up behind him - and they’re all things that have had the “new” in their names swapped out for “old”.

The first picture is a member of the “Kyuusengumi”. This is supposed to be the Edo-period police force Shinsengumi (新選組). But the “shin” (新) in their name means “new”, so here it’s been swapped out for “kyuu” (旧), which means “old”.

The second picture is a baseball player named “Kyuujo”. This is supposed to be outfielder Tsuyoshi Shinjo. Again, the “shin” (新) has been swapped for “kyuu” (旧).

And last we have a man reading a script, and his name is “Furuta Kyuuta”. The same kanji swapping is used here, but remember that kanji can have multiple readings. This time, the “new” kanji (新) is pronounced “ara”, which makes the man Arata Furuta, a famous Japanese character actor.

## YUMI ITODA (FORMERLY ADACHI)

Yumi Itoda/Adachi is a real person! She’s an actress and vocalist. Anime fans might know her best as the voice of Julia in Lupin III: Farewell to Nostradamus, or as Shiraishi-sensei in the live-action film adaptation of The Way of the Househusband. Yumi Adachi is her maiden name; in 2005 she married comedian Jun Itoda, but sadly they divorced in 2009.

## “HERE COMES THE TIGER!”

“Tiger” is series of German heavy tanks from World War II. Based on its appearance, the one driving across the beach here seems to be a Tiger I. Development of the Tiger I began in 1937, and it first saw combat in September of 1942 near Leningrad.

## "DING, DING, DING... POP!"

The sound effect Nozomu's friend makes as he weighs his options is a reference to the 1975 anime Ikkyu-san. In that series, the main character is a boy with a shaven head named Ikkyu (based on the real-life monk mentioned earlier, Soujun Ikkyu). Whenever he's faced with a problem to solve, he sits in the lotus position, licks his two index fingers, and rubs them in circles on top of his head. Then a ticking sound starts, followed by the ding of a bell when he comes up with the solution.

## ONE-DAY ZAKU

In the Gundam comedy spinoff manga Magical Ensign Blaster Mari, the main character, a fifth-grader named Mariko Starmine, is reading about the Zaku I mobile suit. In Japanese, that suit is referred to as the "Old Zaku" (旧ザク) to distinguish it from the more modern Zaku II. Mariko misreads it in the same way the Zetsubou-sensei girls are misreading all these terms, and she calls it the "One-Day Zaku" (1日ザク).

## RUN, EROS...

The preview for episode 3 is a play on "Run, Melos!", a short story by the famous Japanese author Osamu Dazai. Melos is a young shepherd who tries to assassinate a tyrant king. The king catches Melos and sentences him to death, but Melos pleads with the king to let him return home for three days, and offers his friend Selinuntius as collateral, to die in his place if he doesn't return. Though Melos faces many trials and hardship, he manages to return in time.

Here in Zetsubou-sensei, Melos sets up Selinuntius to pay the bar tab if he doesn't return. And it sounds like this Selinuntius might not be so lucky.



# EPISODE 3



## THE ODD COUPLE

Episode 3 opens in Harumi's room, with a shot of a poster on her wall. It's a... uh, "creative interpretation" of Suzaku and Lelouch, two main characters from CLAMP's popular 2006 anime Code Geass.

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

We then cut to a shot of Harumi's desk. To the left, there's a doujinshi titled "Fire Man". The two characters on the front cover are dressed like Edward Elric and Roy Mustang from Fullmetal Alchemist, but they're actually Ritsuka Aoyagi and Soubi Agatsuma from the manga Loveless.



In the upper right-hand corner, there's another book called "Chawan-bushi". This is wordplay mixing "chawanmushi", which is a savory steamed egg custard dish, and "bushi", which here means "a characteristic way of speaking". The characters on the cover are from the long-running manga series *Tactics* - the one dressed in red and white is Kantarou Ichinomiya, the dark-haired man in white and green is Sugino, and Sugino is shouting out "Muu-chan", the name of the little green youkai that he's married to.

And last but not least, the book in the lower right-hand corner... We can only read the letters "ZAN", but given that the character on the cover is Genjo Sanzo from *Saiyuki*, it's probably just his name intentionally misspelled as "Zanzo".

## **RADIO PLAY**

Harumi is listening to a radio show called "Nekketsu Denpa Ningen Club" (Fired-up Radio Wave Human Club). This is a play on a real-life program just called the "Nekketsu Denpa Club" (Fired-up Radio Wave Club). It was produced by Starchild, a King Records sublabel that dealt primarily with anime. It ran as a radio show from 1991 to 2000, and then had a brief stint as a TV program until 2003.

What's more, the three low tones followed by a high tone at the start of the broadcast are the same sound that's used to begin every episode of *Sayonara Zetsubou Housou*, a radio show featuring the *Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei* voice actors.

Also, if you look closely, you can see that the dial on Harumi's radio is set to AM 1192. This isn't an actual radio station... but if you remember the concept of *goroawase* from season 1, these numbers can be read as *i-i-ku-ni*, or "ii kuni" ("a good country"). It's a popular mnemonic taught in schools to help students remember that the Kamakura Period officially began in 1192.

## **SMOOTH MOVES**

Here in episode 3, we get our first look at the finished opening sequence. There's a part about halfway through where Nozomu and the students start dancing, and their routine is very similar to a scene in the 1995 Indian movie *Muthu*. Indian movies aren't generally popular in Japan, but a Japanese film critic stumbled across *Muthu* while he was in Singapore, and he loved it so much that he worked to bring the film to his home country. Eventually, in 1998, the movie was released in Japanese theaters as *Muthu: The Dancing Maharaja*. It went on to become a huge success, and was the highest grossing Indian movie in Japanese history until the release of *RRR* in October of 2022.

## **WHAT WOULD A FIGHT BETWEEN A GOAT AND A RUSSIAN WOMAN BE LIKE?**

This Lupin-style text is referencing a recurring topic from *Sayonara Zetsubou Housou*: an erotic video titled "Goat vs. Russian Woman". The show hosts discussed who they would "root for", and in one episode, Kudo-kun even told the story aloud. (Don't be alarmed - it was Kudo's own made-up version where a starving goat delivers a Russian woman's letter to her husband without eating it, then dies and goes to Heaven.)



## YOU'RE 17, DON'T YOU WANT TO PINCH YOUR NEW WRINKLES?

This title is a spoof on a line from Kenzaburou Oe's novella Seventeen: "You're 17 now, don't you want to pinch your new muscles?"

## "EVERYBODY'S THROWING NEW YEAR'S PARTIES..."

There's a joke hidden in here. The Japanese word for "New Year's party" is "bounenkai" (忘年会), which literally means "forget-the-year party". What's more, the middle kanji (年) can mean both "year" and "age". So with just a little twist, you can see how Nozomu thinks of a bounenkai as a "forget-your-age party".

## EIGHTEEN

One of Harumi's magazines has a picture of Chiri on the cover. The magazine is called "Eighteen", a play on Seventeen, a magazine aimed at teenage girls. Though many US readers will probably be familiar with the American version of Seventeen, which has been running since 1944, there is also a Japanese version that started its run in 1967. Though the publishing companies aren't related, the influence is clear.

There are a lot of headlines on the cover. From the bottom up, they're:

- Be on the lookout for these magic boots that make your feet 5cm smaller, and your legs 5cm longer!!
- You want to wear your favorite one-piece dress every day... But wearing the same thing all the time is boring!!
- Be cooler than anyone else this fall and winter with our "mature" plan. Fashion and makeup tips to help you look 2 years older!!
- 100 fashion items and stylish samples
- Riders, leopard print, fur, ponchos, booties, etc... We'll show you 100 complete outfits!

## ANUMEJO



The next magazine we see has Nozomu on the cover! It says “Anumejo”, but this is a poke at the real-life anime magazine Animage. Animage began its run in 1978, and has been a staple among anime fans ever since.

There are a lot of headlines on this cover, as well:

- **Zetsubou-sensei: Lelelelelousu of the Flagellation - Last-minute update! A look at the long-awaited Stage 24 & 25!**: This is referencing Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion. In that anime series, the episodes were called “stages”.

- **Tekkaishi**: This is a play on the manga series Kekkaishi, which means “Barrier Master”. With the kanji used here, “Tekkaishi” would mean “Repealing Master”.

- **Mononokai**: A play on the 2007 anime series Mononoke. The title for Mononoke is written a little strangely in Japanese, using katakana for the first three letters, and the kanji for “mystery” as the fourth: モノノ怪. Here, for the fake series “Mononokai”, they use the same first three katakana, plus the kanji for “answer”: モノノ解

- **Jukai Girls**: A play on J.C. Staff’s Sky Girls franchise. In Japanese, the English word “sky” is pronounced sukai; it’s been swapped out here for jukai, which means “woodlands”.

- **Special Pinup: Break Through, Koishikawa Rocket**: This is a mashup of two different series. The first is Break Through with a Rocket, a short manga about motor sports from Katsunori Matsui. The second is Oh! Edo Rocket, a story that started out as a stage play and went on to be adapted into novels, manga, and anime. “Edo” is the old name for Tokyo, which has been changed here to “Koishikawa”, a district in Tokyo.

- **Use your Silver Power! Roujin Work**: A play on the four-panel manga series Doujin Work. Roujin means “senior citizen”.

- **Mobile Suit Gundam 000**: An obvious play on Mobile Suit Gundam 00.

- **Kunrenyou Shin-chan**: A play on the long-running anime series Crayon Shin-chan. In Japanese, the English word “crayon” is pronounced kureyon. That’s been swapped out here for kunrenyou, which means “used in training drills”.

- **Ookiku Buremakutte**: A play on the baseball manga Ookiku Furikabutte, known in the US as Big Windup. Ookiku means “big”, and buremakutte is a phrase from the song Hito to shite Jiku ga Bureteiru, the opening song from the first season of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. It means “to shake over and over again”.

- **The Familiar of Ero / Bonnou Coil**: This is another play on two different series: the long-running light novel series The Familiar of Zero, and Madhouse’s 2007 sci-fi series Dennou Coil. “Zero” has been swapped out with “Ero” as in “erotic”, and “dennou” (“cyber”) has been changed to “bennou” (“worldly desires”).

- **Girls Must-See Love ♥ Butler Book “The Charming Tokita”**: Just as a reminder, the Itoshiki family butler is named Tokita.

- **Magical Virgin Feature 2007**: It’s a common joke in Japan that if you’re still a virgin by the time you reach 30 years of age, you gain magical powers.



## WHAT LIES UNDERNEATH

Underneath Harumi's copy of Anumejo, there's a magazine with Setsuna and Allelujah from Mobile Suit Gundam 00 on its cover. Part of the name is cut off, but it's still clearly PASH, an anime magazine aimed at women.

## "CONGRATULATIONS ON HITTING YOUR 30S!!"

Matoi's voice actress, Asami Sanada, and Harumi's voice actress, Miyu Matsuki, both turned 30 in 2007. Normally in Japan, there's a stigma attached to women as they grow older, but these two fully embraced it. Miyu Matsuki even held a concert on her 30th birthday, and called it the Misoji Matsuri ("The Thirties Festival").

## PINE + NAPPLE

Harumi is drawing a doujinshi about boys named Pine and Napple. They're based off of Coco and Nuts, two characters from the children's anime series Yes! Precure 5. Not only do Pine and Napple look almost exactly like Coco and Nuts, but we can also see another Yes! Precure 5 character, Nozomi, while Harumi is fast-forwarding through the show on TV.

## "NIGHTMARE FREAKING ROCKS!"

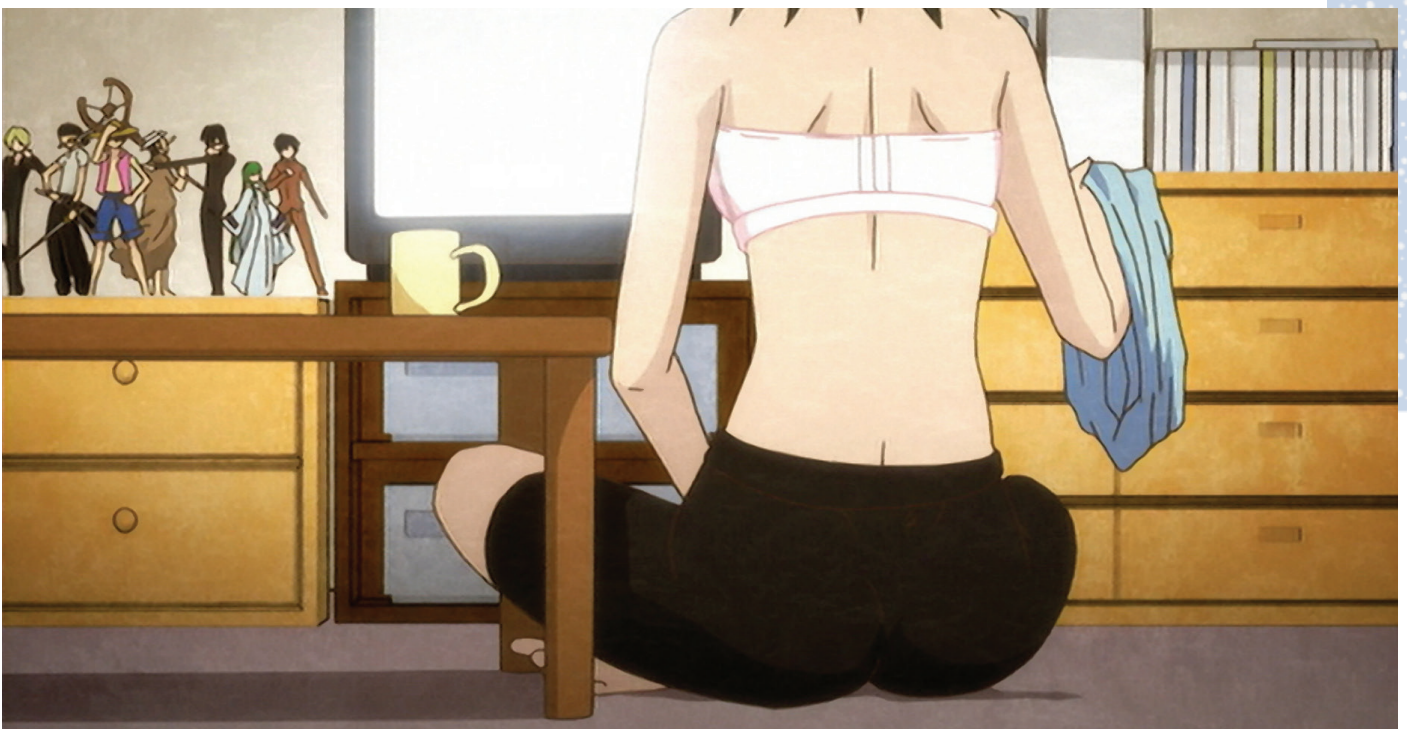
Continuing with the Yes! Precure 5 references, in that show, "Nightmare" is the name of a villainous evil organization.

## SWITCHING SHOWS

Harumi starts her video search by fast-forwarding through Yes! Precure 5, but the next time we see her TV, it's fast-forwarding through one of the openings from season one of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei.

## FIGURING IT OUT

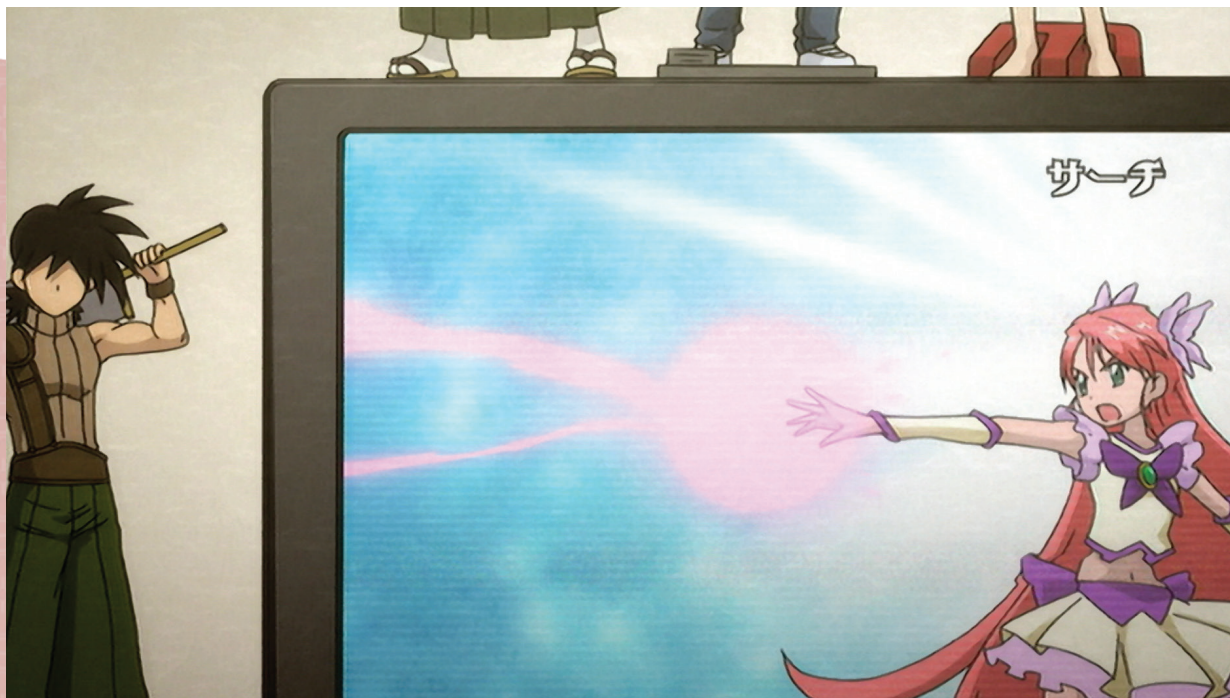
After Harumi takes her shirt off, we get a closer look at the figures near her TV set. Starting from the left, there are four One Piece figures (Sanji, Zoro, Luffy, and Usopp), and three Code Geass figures (Lelouch, C.C., and Suzaku).



In later shots, we can see she has a couple of Gunpla as well... though they're posed in dramatic BL fashion. On her desk, there's a pencil case with an orange version of Lord Cat from Pani Poni Dash. (It will change colors later on, just like the real Lord Cat.) And right next to her TV is a figure that's meant to be Zack Fair, the cheerful member of SOLDIER from Final Fantasy VII.

## MORE OF THE CURE

Harumi's back to scrolling through episodes of Yes! Precure 5, as we see Cure Dream (Nozomi in her transformed state) fighting against Bloody, a high-ranking member of Nightmare.



## WRITTEN IN INK

On Harumi's desk, among all her drawing materials, there's a dark brown bottle with a distinct yellow lid. This is most likely Kaimei Ink, a type of India ink often used by manga artists.





## THE DARK HISTORY

When Harumi opens her browser, we get a quick look at her bookmarks. They include:

- CG Art
- Shota
- BL Search
- Coupling Search
- Boy's Love Links
- Demon's Sunday
- Gakuen Seven X (a play on the BL game series Gakuen Heaven)
- Pine x Napple
- I'm the Number One Sexiest (the title of an actual gay manga written by Junichi Yamakawa)
- Yao-blog
- Falling in love with you (the way this is phrased in Japanese marks it as Reiko Shiratoriza-wa's often-said line from the romance manga Tsurumoku Dokushinryou)
- Boy's Game Style (a play on the gaming magazine aimed girls, Dengeki Girl's Style)

## SHELVED

There's an issue of Loveless on Harumi's bookshelf. Though we can't see the full title, the character on the front makes it obvious; it's one of the series' main characters, Soubi Agatsuma.

## "...THERE ARE PEOPLE LIKE YUKI OKAZAKI IN JAPAN!"

While Kafuka says this, the camera quickly cuts to a realistic-looking woman with a shocked expression on her face. This is meant to be Yuki Okazaki, a real actress in the Japanese TV drama Okusama wa 18-sai ("My Wife is 18 Years Old"). In the story, Yuki's character is a high-school senior who goes through with her arranged marriage earlier than planned, all so that her grandmother can see her in a wedding gown. As a result, she's an 18-year-old married to a high-school teacher - a relationship which they both have to hide from everyone around them. Yuki Okazaki won the New Artist of the Year award in 1970 for her performance.



## "I'M INOUE KIKUKO, 17 YEARS AND 9619 DAYS OLD!"

Kikuko Inoue, the famous voice actress, was born on September 25th, 1964. This episode of Zetsubou-sensei originally aired at midnight on Friday, January 25th, 2008 - which means it technically aired on Saturday, January 26th, 2008, exactly 9619 days after her 17th birthday. They really did the math for this one!

### A COLLECTION OF DESPAIR



When we see Harumi's shelf full of CDs, the most prominent one is based on a real release. That's the cover of the Zetsubou Song Collection, which is an album of character image songs sung by the Zetsubou-sensei voice actors.

However, starting two albums to the right of the Zetsubou Song Collection, there are CDs with character names written on the spine. For example, there's a CD with "Kafuka" written where the catalog number would usually be, and the title of the album is "~A Pact with God~". This is the title of Kafuka's image song on the Zetsubou Song Collection. In fact, as you continue along the shelf, almost all the songs are there:

- The Chiri album/song is "The Rose Coffin"
- The Kiri and Matoi album/song is "Kagerou (Twice as Stuck)"
- The Nami album/song is "Main Character (Hitou)"
- The Kaere and Maria album/song is "Miss Universe(s)"
- The Abiru and Harumi album/song is "fetish"



## **"CHIRI-CHAN SITS ASTRIDE A JOBA MACHINE AND TURNS IT ON."**

Joba is a brand of exercise machine that looks like a saddle. When the user sits on it, it pitches and rolls, simulating the movement of a horse. The claim is that this form of "horseback riding" works your core muscles and burns calories. But whether or not it was effective, it was certainly incredibly popular in Japan.

## **PLAY US OUT, NAMI**

As the episode of Nekketsu Denpa Ningen Club comes to an end, the song playing in the background is "Main Character (Hitou)", Nami's aforementioned image song from the Zetsubou Song Collection.

## **KAORI MANABE'S JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME**

Kaori Manabe is a real person, and she really did have a blog called "Koko Dake no Hanashi" ("Just Between You and Me"). Manabe's blog was incredibly popular at its peak, getting over 100,000 views per day.

## **BRAND AWARENESS**

Majiru's computer monitor is made by "SHAFT". That's the name of the company that animated Zetsubou-sensei, put there instead of the name of the actual home electronics company, SHARP.

## **OBLIGATIONS AND SOLDIERS**

This title is a twist on Wheat and Soldiers, a novel by Japanese author Ashihei Hino. As a soldier himself, he often wrote about the human side of war.

## **I LOVE AI-CHAN I LOVE TOMO-CHAN**

In October of 2005, a man climbed 100 meters up the Tokyo Tower, and then unfurled a banner that said "I really love Tomo-chan! ♥", apparently as a message to Japanese pop singer Tomomi Kahara. After the man came down, he was promptly arrested for trespassing.

Later that same year, a train operator for the Tokyo Metro caused a stir by shouting "I love Ai-chan!!!" over and over again from the operator's booth. People were so concerned about him that someone eventually pushed the emergency button while the train was stopped at Nishikasai Station. Staff rushed to the train but determined the man was fine, and he stayed on his shift. Apparently, the operator claimed he was just talking to himself, and didn't realize how loud he'd become.

## **WITHOUT THE WIDE, I HAVE NO MOTIVATION.**

The Wide was a TV show hosted by Hitoshi Kusano. It was a "wide show," a news and talk show similar to The Today Show or Good Morning America. It ran for an impressive 15 years, but finally aired its last episode in September of 2007.

## "TAKAMISAKARI'S ROBOCOP SHTICK!"

Takamisakari Seiken was a sumo wrestler whose career ran from 1999 to 2013. He had a pre-bout ritual where he would punch downwards repeatedly with both arms; it looked fairly robotic, and earned him the nickname "Robocop".

## "LEAVING A COMMENT CARD FOR SHIRAISHI-SAN AT THE CO-OP!"

This is referring to a man named Masanori Shiraishi. In 2004, he was a staff member of the co-op at the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. Part of his job was replying to comment cards from other union members - but he often replied with humor and wit, and posted the comment cards on his blog. This eventually became so popular that the comments were turned into a best-selling book. However, the downside of this popularity was that people started asking about literally anything, not just co-op related matters.

Most of the comment cards in the picture are unreadable, but there are two we can make out:

**Comment:** Lately, I've been tired no matter what I do... I'm so tired. From "Bad Person"

**Response:** Oh, you don't say. -Shiraishi

**Comment:** I want to see more anime starring Rie Kugimiya. There needs to be more! From "Sato"

**Response:** Please never leave your house again. -Shiraishi

## "THE HANDKERCHIEF..."

In 2006, pitcher Yuuki Saito led his team to the summer Koshien championship, and the media nicknamed him the "Handkerchief Prince" for the way he wiped his brow on the pitching mound. Years later, he admitted that he didn't like the nickname at all.

## "DON'T COME OUT TO PLAY IN CASUAL WEAR, YO\*\* HATA!"

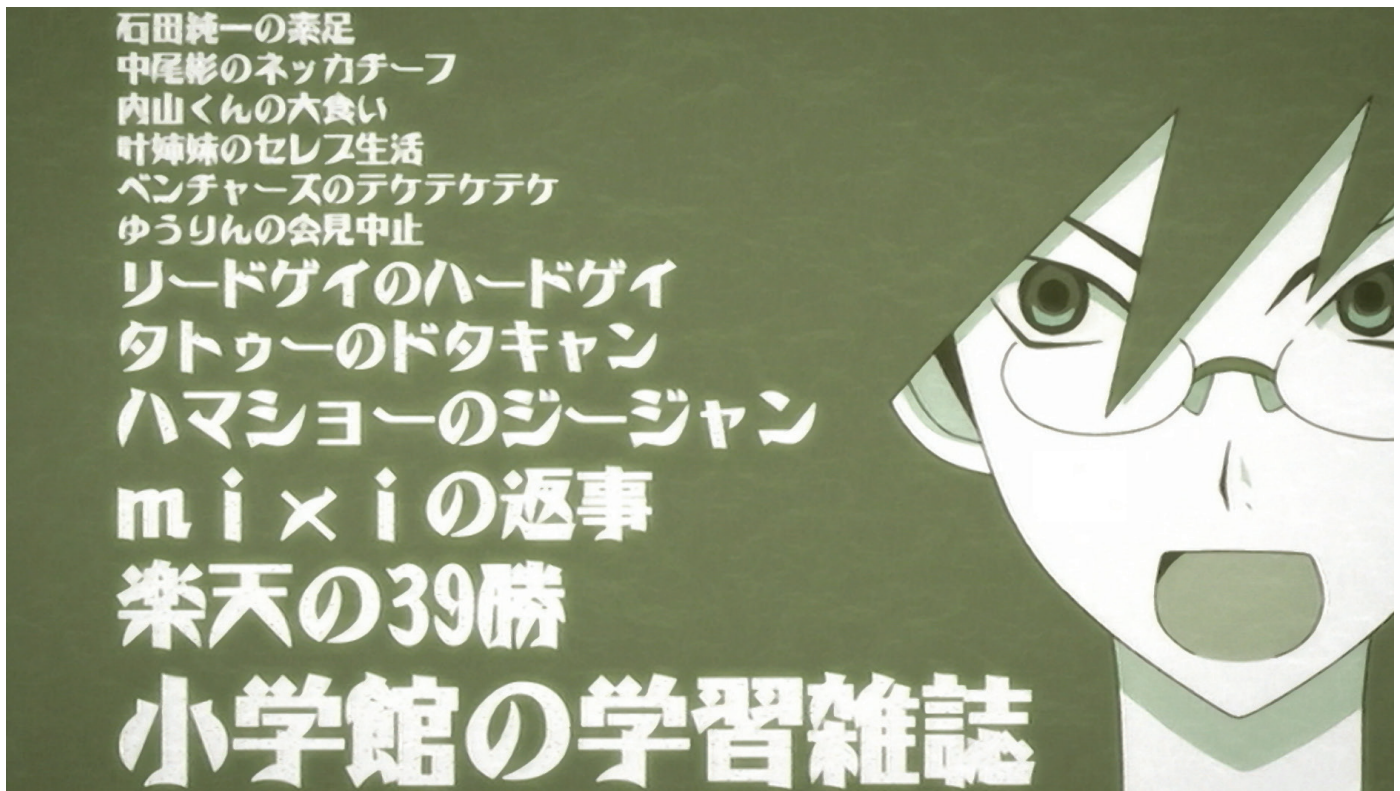
The censored name is Yoku Hata. He's a stand-up comedian, and one of his most well-known gags was appearing as "The Guitar Samurai" - dressed in a yukata, he would (mis)quote and mock famous people while playing the guitar. However, after the novelty of the act eventually began to wane, he would sometimes appear on shows wearing regular clothes.

## "WHERE'S THE SPREAD-LEG POSE?!"

The girl in the magazine is Yan Yingling, a Taiwanese swimsuit model/singer/professional wrestler/pinup girl who lived in Japan. She began her career with erotic photography, but Kagerou seems a bit disappointed with her recent efforts.



**"ANYWAY, MANY THINGS ARE TURNED INTO OBLIGATIONS!"**



Text scrolls up the screen behind Nozomu as he says this. The items in the list are all things that people see as obligatory:

- **Aki Hoshino showing cleavage:** Aki Hoshino is a bikini idol.
- **Katsura Sanshi falling:** Katsura Sanshi is a rakugo artist and former co-host of a show called Newlyweds Welcome! Newlyweds come on the show and talk about their lives together and how they met, and Katsura would often fall out of his chair in shock over their strange stories.
- **Jun'ichi Ishida wearing shoes without socks:** Jun'ichi Ishida is an actor who became famous for not wearing socks. He finally wore socks to a promotional event for the International Patisserie Grand Prix in 2009; it was the first time he had worn socks in public in 20 years.
- **Akira Nakao's neckerchiefs:** Akira Nakao is also an actor, and wherever he appears, he often has some sort of scarf wrapped tastefully around his neck.
- **Shinji Uchiyama eating a lot:** Shinji Uchiyama is another actor; anime fans might know him from his role as Gluttony in the live-action Fullmetal Alchemist movies. Suffice it to say, Shinji is a big guy.
- **The Kano Sisters' extravagant lifestyle:** Kyoko and Mika Kano are Japanese glitterati who are well-known for their outrageous clothes, expensive jewelry, and all-around flashy lifestyle.
- **The Ventures' glissandos:** The Ventures are an American instrumental rock band from the 1950s. Their first big hit, "Walk, Don't Run", was an international sensation; and when they toured Japan in 1962, they found instant fame there, which has lasted to this day. As for a "glissando", it's a musical term for sliding up (or down) a scale of notes without articulating each one. This technique is part of The Ventures' signature sound.

• **Yuurin cancelling press conferences:** This is actually meant to be Yuukorin, a nickname for pinup model Yuko Ogura. In the mid-to-late 2000s, she went through several messy relationships and breakups, so she would cancel press conferences on the spot if they asked any personal questions.

• **Hard sex scenes between gay leads**

• **Tatu canceling shows at the last minute:** In 2003, Russian pop duo t.A.T.u were scheduled to appear on TV Asahi's Music Station - and though they did show up at first, they left before performing and stood up the audience. Then they immediately cancelled a second scheduled appearance, citing a "difference of opinion between the artists and management."

• **Hamasho's denim jackets:** You might remember from episode 1 that there are two prominent people nicknamed "Hamasho". This is referring to Shougo Hamada, the singer. His number one trademark was wearing sunglasses, but wearing jean jackets - often the full Canadian tuxedo - wasn't far behind.

• **Mixi responses:** Mixi is a Japanese social networking service that launched in 2004. It was incredibly popular; by 2007, it had more than 10 million users.

• **Rakuten winning 39 games:** The Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles baseball team was formed in 2004... but it was a bit of a rocky start. In 2005, their first season, they won 38 games... out 136. It would take until 2009 for them to have a season where they won more games than they lost.

• **Shogakukan educational magazines:** The manga publisher Shogakukan used to print a series of "Educational Magazines" which were separated out by school year, and featured manga appropriate to that age level. (The "Education" part was learning to read via manga.) Most of them are discontinued now, though as of this writing, the "First Grade", "Kindergarten", and "Eighth Grade" magazines are still running.

• **Manga frontispieces featuring swimsuits:** Manga anthology magazines run several different series at once, meaning cover space is at a premium. But instead of putting manga characters on the cover, several anthologies use that space to preview the pinup models who appear in a handful of pages in the magazine.

• **The Asia Cup:** The AFC Asian Cup is a soccer tournament, where the winner is crowned the continental champion of Asia. Japan is the winningest team among all involved, with four championships under their belt (in 1992, 2000, 2004, and 2011).

• **Kikuko Inoue:** Kikuko Inoue is one of the most prolific voice actresses in anime history. She's here in Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei as the voice of Manami, and you have almost certainly heard her in other shows as well.

## ***"IT'S INOUE KIKUKO, AGE 17!"***

It's become a running gag in anime fandom that Kikuko Inoue is perpetually 17 years old. Whenever she's asked her age, she replies that she's 17, to which her fans dutifully respond, "Come on, now!" In truth, Kikuko was born in 1964.



## PRESIDENT V. PUTIN

This is a play on Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia. In early 2008, when this show aired, there were a lot of anxious eyes on Putin as his time in the presidency expired. The Russian Constitution prohibited Putin from holding the office for a third consecutive term, and people wondered if he would step down quietly. He did... technically. Right after the new president was elected, Putin was immediately appointed as the Prime Minister of Russia, which meant he retained all his political power. By 2012, Putin was back in office as president.

## MIRAKURU 355 CREPES

There was a children's cooking anime called Miracle! Mimika that aired in 2006. If you remember the number wordplay of goroawase, the numbers 3-3-5 can be read as mi-mi-ka, making the name of this shop "Miracle Mimika".

## TOKYO WINS THE ALL-JAPAN HIGH SCHOOL HOMECOMING CHAMPIONSHIP

This is based on a popular joke news story from 2006. It was a story like you might read in The Onion: an All-Japan High School Homecoming Championship was held, with high school students from all over Japan gathering in Saitama Stadium to see who could go home the fastest. Many of the "athletes" ran into problems - one loitered around a convenience store eating rice balls, another one got distracted by an arcade, another one was disqualified for stealing a bicycle - but the winner, Taro Sato from Saitama, made it home in 1 hour, 2 minutes, and 42 seconds.

## "SUCH EGO-DRIVEN OBLIGATIONS!"

A huge list scrolls up the screen behind Nozomu here:

- **Hibi's Outfits when he Returns to Japan:** This is meant to be "Hide", as in Hidetoshi Nakata, one of Japan's most successful soccer players. He has a huge interest in fashion and often wears designer clothing, making a splash with fans and the press whenever he returns to his home country. (But since he's on this list, Nozomu seems to think he only wears designer clothes out of obligation.)

- **The Wig Boxer:** Masayuki Koguchi was a relatively unknown boxer, until December 13, 2005. That day, during a fight against Daichi Shibata, the wig that Masayuki had been secretly wearing started to slip off. Eventually his cornerman just took it off before round 5, which made the audience roar with laughter. But this momentary embarrassment became Masayuki's ticket to fame. He suddenly found himself flooded with requests for TV appearances and hair growth product endorsements. After that, Koguchi never wore a wig into the ring again (it was technically against the rules), but he would wear wigs as part of his ring walk, and then throw them into the crowd before the fight started.

- **"1, 2, 3, Unbelievable!":** In 2003, American coach Trey Hillman took over as manager for the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters. He couldn't speak much Japanese, but he always tried to speak a few broken sentences for the sake of players and fans. When his team won the pennant in 2006, he shouted "Shinjirarenai!" ("Unbelievable!") in a very thick accent, and the fans loved it so much that it became a catchphrase for the rest of his career.

- **Ro\*d After Chapter 3:** The censored word is "Road", a song series written by Japanese rock band THE TRA-BRYU in 1993. Road was originally meant to be one song, but it was over an hour long. That meant that it wouldn't fit on an 8cm CD, the most popular format for single releases at the time. So it was split into 13 parts, and released in chapters over the next eight years.

• **Sachiko Kobayashi's Kouhaku Outfits:** Sachiko Kobayashi is an enka singer who has been performing since 1963, when she was nine years old. She's been on the New Year's music show Kouhaku Uta Gassen more than 30 times, and she almost always appears in wild, over-the-top costumes. One year, she wore a dress made of silver tinsel with a giant bird on her head as a hat. Another year, she started out in a deep red cloak covered in flowers, and changed, mid-song, into a feathery purple dress that had a giant, whirling, purple-and-silver mechanism rotating behind her head.

• **Taro Kimura's Puns:** Taro Kimura is a television journalist who was once part of a news show called FNN NEWS COM. He was famous for always wrapping things up with a groan-worthy pun.

• **Hiroshima Carps Player Saito's Handkerchief (Red):** We've already covered Yuuki Saito (斎藤 佑樹), the high-school baseball player whom the media nicknamed the "Handkerchief Prince". But there was another Yuuki Saito (齊藤 悠葵), a professional player for the Hiroshima Toyo Carp. The sports media nicknamed him the "Red Handkerchief Prince" (the Carp jerseys are red), and he made a play of wiping his forehead with a red handkerchief during interviews.

• **Caps on Plastic Bottles:** Plastic bottle caps in Japan often have fancy logos or designs on them, even though they're just meant to be thrown away.

• **Sealed Pages in Magazines:** Generally speaking, magazines that are low on content will throw in some sealed pinup pages to help entice people to buy them.

• **Japa\*et's Freebies:** Japanet Takata is a home shopping network that claims to offer customers fantastic prices... but they also throw in so many extras (for example, buying a rice cooker and getting a frying pan for "free") that the prices tend to be higher than if you bought the item on its own.

• **Mos Burger Explaining Where Your Food Came From (With Photos):** Mos Burger is a fast food hamburger chain in Japan, similar to McDonalds. Even though it's not exactly gourmet food, they still run information campaigns showing the farms where their vegetables are grown.

• **Cell Phones Getting Smaller:** In the age before smart phones, a cell phone's technological prowess was partially measured by how small it could be. Moving away from the bulky portable phones of the 90's to small handheld phones was good, but they started to get so small that they were easy to lose or break.

• **"World Police":** The United States military is, by far, the largest in the world. After the deadly terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the US invaded Iraq and became directly involved in Middle Eastern affairs; then-President George W. Bush proclaimed that "Iraqi democracy will succeed - and that success will send forth the news, from Damascus to Tehran - that freedom can be the future of every nation." Prevailing sentiment in the 2000s was that the US, with all its military might, had an obligation to prevent violence around the world.

• **Koizumi Surprise:** Former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi won his election by promising that he would change his corrupt political party (the Liberal Democratic Party), and if they wouldn't change, he would destroy it instead. As one of his first big shake-ups, Koizumi asked Takeo Hiranuma, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, to take up a senior post in the LDP - and he did so without first seeking permission from Hiranuma's faction leaders. It was a surprise to everyone involved, especially the faction bosses. Hiranuma was forbidden from accepting the senior post, but he did stay on at the ministry.



"DVDs RECOMMENDED BY OTHER PEOPLE."



The DVDs falling down from the sky are Japanese releases of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. Nozomu won't even watch his own show?

## HANDBELL CONCERT



Nozomu's ticket is "No.326". This is a reference to the artist known as 326. His real name is Mitsuru Nakamura, but if you remember your goroawase, "Mi-tsu-ru" can be written using the numbers 3-2-6, which is how the artist refers to himself. According to the ticket, the concert is being held at 7PM on December 17th in Yotsuya-ku, a ward that hasn't existed since 1947 (that year, it was merged with Ushigome and Yodobashi to form the modern ward of Shinjuku).

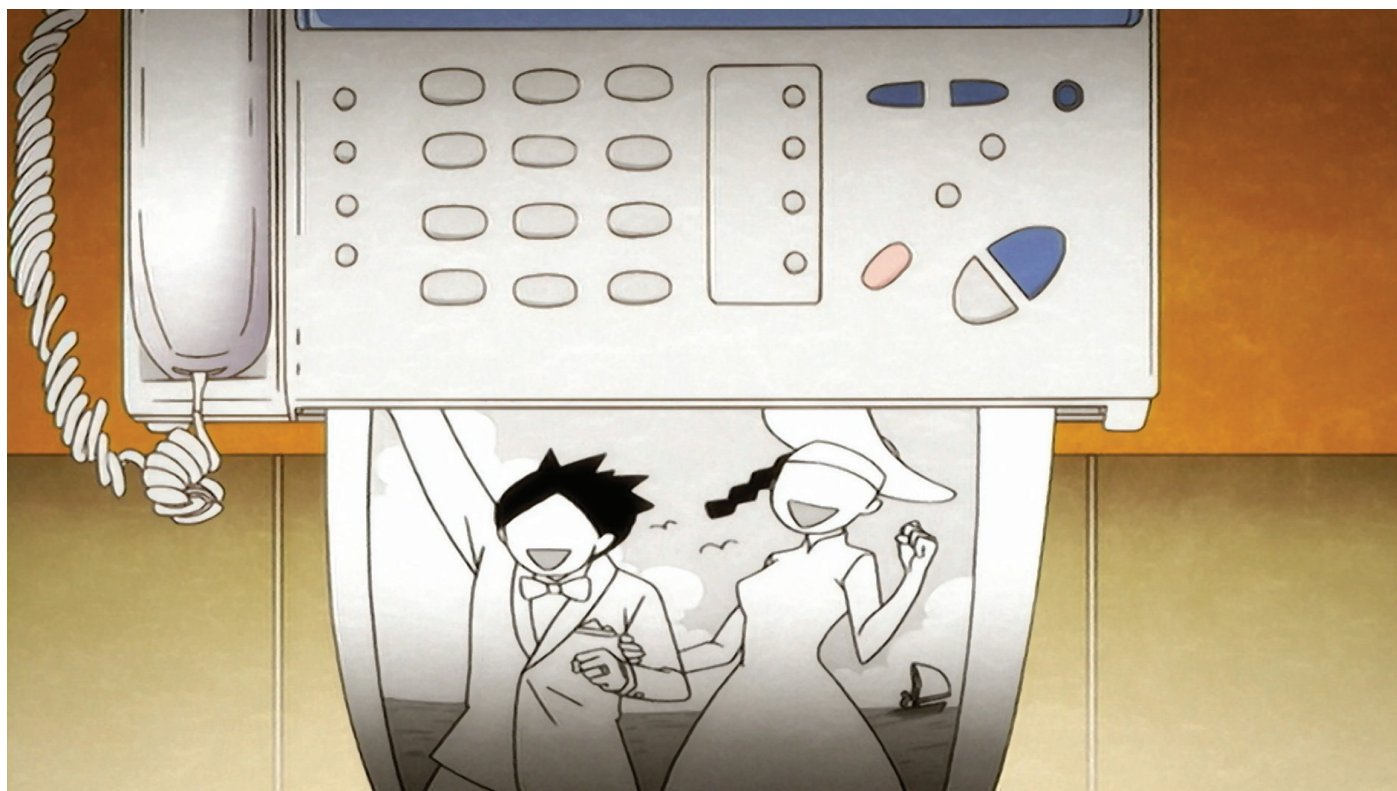
## **"SHE'S DONE ALL THE COOKING FOR US EVER SINCE WE STARTED LIVING HERE."**

If you recall, at the end of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei season 1, Nozomu's house was blown up. Apparently he's been living in the Night Duty Room ever since.

## **"HE'S TURNING INTO A NO-HOPER, KOMORI-CHAN!"**

The word Maria uses for "no-hoper" in Japanese is damenzu (だめんず); it's a combination of the Japanese words for "bad" (dame) and "men" (menzu). The slang word got its start in Mayumi Kurata's popular essay series Damens Walker.

## **"ANNOUNCING YOUR MARRIAGE VIA A SINGLE FAX PAGE!"**



The picture in the fax machine is a spoof on a real wedding photo of vocal artists TM Revolution and Yumi Yoshimura (of Puffy AmiYumi fame). They were married in 1999, and divorced in 2002.

## **"ANNOUNCING YOUR RETIREMENT ON YOUR HOMEPAGE!"**

As Nozomu says this, we're shown a picture of a blog titled "Hde's Mail", with an entry that says "Setting off on a new journey." This is a reference to Hidetoshi Nakata, the famous soccer player who's been mentioned in previous liner notes. After Japan lost to Brazil in the 2006 World Cup finals, Hidetoshi shocked the world by announcing on his blog that he was retiring from soccer at the age of 29. "I will never go out on the pitch again as a professional football player," he said, "but I will never give up football."

## **"BREAKING UP VIA A SINGLE TEXT!"**

The text in question is from "Ebizou" to "Sato". The people in question here are kabuki actor Ichikawa Ebizou (real name Takatoshi Horikoshi), and actress Sato Eriko. They were a couple for three months in 2007, but Ebizou broke things off rather quickly and jumped straight into a relationship with another actress, Takaoka Saki.



## **"BEING DEMOTED VIA ONE SHEET OF OFFICE PAPER!"**

That poor man is being sent off to Hinamizawa, a fictional village in the murder mystery series *Higurashi When They Cry*. A lot of bad things happen in that town, so let's hope he gets transferred again soon.

## **"IT'S THE HIDDEN BLADE OF CONVERSATION!"**

The Hidden Blade is a 2004 samurai movie from director Yoji Yamada. Within the film itself, the "hidden blade" is a technique that involves taking someone by surprise, and quickly stabbing them through the heart with a small, thin blade. The victim dies almost immediately, and the wound leaves no trace of blood.

## **VOICE ACTRESS >>> MASTER**

This is from a story that Ryouko Shintani (the voice of Nami) told on the radio show *Sayonara Zetsubou Housou*. Apparently, when Kouji Kumeta won the Kodansha Manga Award for *Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei*, his former assistant, Kenjiro Hata, was too busy with *Hayate the Combat Butler* to attend the ceremony, or even to send a note of congratulations. However, both Ryouko and Marina Inoue (the voice of Chiri) told Kenjiro that he should at least try to visit Kouji Kumeta on his birthday in September. So eventually, Kenjiro sent a message to Kouji saying the two should meet up.

Kouji, meanwhile, wondered why Kenjiro was sending him a message out of the blue. When he found out that Kenjiro was only asking to see him because Ryouko and Marina told him he should, he felt utterly dejected, and sent Ryouko Shintani an email with the subject line: Voice Actress >>> Master. (In other words, a voice actress holds much more sway over someone than their old teacher does.)

## **BUTT-DIGGING BUG**

In 2007, husband/wife duo Uruma Delvi wrote a children's song called *Oshiri Kajiri Mushi* ("Butt-biting Bug"). It was a goofy little song about a bug who liked to bite people in the rear end, and it ended up being so popular that it was even turned into an anime.

Meanwhile, the Internet being what it is, "Butt-biting Bug" was quickly memed into "Butt-digging Bug". I will leave the details of this particular meme to your imagination.

## **GO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ASOU FAMILY**

Tarou Asou, a politician with the Liberal Democratic Party, is part of a pretty elite family. His grandfather was once Prime Minister of Japan, and held the seat for longer than almost anyone. His sister is a literal princess, the widow of Prince Tomohito of Mikasa. Even his wife is the daughter of former Prime Minister Zenkou Suzuki. Thus, running off to become a part of the Asou family might not be a bad idea.

## **BELLYBUTTON LINT SESAMIN**

In Japanese, the word for "bellybutton lint" is "heso no goma". However, the word "goma" can also mean "sesame seeds". And sesamin is a polyphenol found in sesame seeds, which some people take as a supplement to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

So, there you have it. Sesamin, not from sesame seeds (goma), but from your bellybutton lint (heso no goma). Pretty sure 0 out of 10 doctors would recommend it.

"WE HAVE TO TAKE THE NUMBER OF DAYS INOUE-SAN SAYS IN HER SKIT AND CHANGE IT FOR THE TV AND DVD VERSIONS."

As Nozomu is saying this, there's text up on the blackboard that says:

Sorry m(\_ \_)m

Grownup stuff happened, and we weren't able to change it

~Producer Kamada~

These two things are both connected. If you recall, for Kikuko Inoue's earlier appearance in a radio skit, they calculated the exact number of days between this episode's TV air date and her 17th birthday. Apparently they were also planning to calculate the exact number of days between the DVD release date for this episode and her 17th birthday... But production problems got in the way, and they weren't able to get Kikuko back into the studio to re-record the line for the DVD version.

"THEY ALL CASUALLY DROP BOMBSHELLS!"



Text flies frantically across the screen as Nozomu says this. Here's a list of what's flashing by:

- **Images may differ from the actual product:** The cheeseburger in a McDonald's commercial never really looks like the cheeseburger you get in the restaurant, does it?
- **Individual results may vary:** Don't hold your breath about that expensive new diet pill.
- **For showtimes, contact your local theater:** Back in 2008, only large movie theater chains like Toho and AEON (formerly Warner Mycal) had widely distributed showtimes. If you wanted to know showtimes for your local mom and pop theater, you had to contact them directly.
- **The characters in this game are 18 years old:** There are plenty of games and anime where the girls are said to be 18, but they sure don't look like it.



- **Excessive smoking can be harmful to your health:** After drawing you in with flashy advertisements and fancy packaging, cigarette cartons casually have a little warning on them telling you smoking causes lung cancer.

- **The 118% is because some people received offers from more than one company:** Yoyogi Animation Academy used to run ads claiming a graduate employment rate of over 100%. This incredible feat was accomplished by double-counting people who passed more than one employment exam.

- **Female “students”:** Related to the “18 years old” comment above, adult games and shows will often deliberately avoid mentioning that a girl is in high school, and just call her a “student” to keep it ambiguous.

- **Extra fees and charges may be applied:** Cell phone companies are always vying to offer the lowest prices to customers, but they make up for it with hidden fees and surcharges.

- **My real age is 2\*:** In March 2007, pin-up model Jun Natsukawa - who had always claimed she was born in 1983 - admitted that she was actually born in 1980.

- **“0.1% Alcohol” written on non-alcoholic beer:** Many non-alcoholic beers still do contain a small amount of alcohol. In Japan, drinks with less than 1% alcoholic content aren’t categorized as liquors (though minors still aren’t allowed to drink them).

## THIN STATIONMASTER

LCD TVs were all the rage in the late 2000s. Their two biggest selling points were that they were thin, and they had liquid crystal displays. The joke here is that the Japanese word for “liquid crystal” is ekishou (えきしょう), which is just one tiny letter change away from ekijou (えきじょう), which means “stationmaster”.

## AN OFF-THE-AIR VICTORY

In October 2007, the Yomiuri Giants played against the Yakult Swallows for the Central League championship. However, the Giants had been in a slump for a while, so for the first time ever, Nippon TV (the broadcasting network that would normally air Giants games) declined to show the game.

Problem is, the Giants won.

As the players lifted their manager into the air in celebration, the network scrambled to swap over to footage of the stadium. In the end, the best they could manage was to preempt their scheduled programming with a 10-minute highlight reel from the game.

## **ABE-SAN, WE'RE SORRY**

It's probably obvious by now, but this show makes plenty of jokes involving Shinzou Abe, the former Prime Minister of Japan. This is the staff's way of apologizing. (Though they'll still continue to do it.)

## **THE ONE I LOVE IS IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE**

This last bit of Lupin text is a reference to the 1995 Studio Ghibli movie *Whisper of the Heart*. In Japan, the slogan for the movie was "There's someone I love" (Suki na hito ga dekimashita)... But here, it says, "The one I love is in love with someone else" (Suki na hito ga suki na hito ga dekimashita). This is likely connected to a comment that Assistant Director Naoyuki Tatsuwa made in the February 2008 issue of *Animage*, in a piece about "Zetsubou Experiences in 2007". His answer was, "The girl I loved had a boyfriend."

## **"DON'T DROP A BOMBSHELL LIKE THAT ON ME!" REBUFFED MELOS AS HE GOT TO HIS FEET**

This title is another play on Osamu Dazai's short story, "Run, Melos!" Hypothetically speaking, this is probably what Melos would have said after being told that if he didn't come back in time, he'd receive a full pardon.

## **BOTCHAN**

The preview for episode 4 is based on a novel named *Botchan*, by Natsume Souseki. The real title is written 坊っちゃん, which means "Young Master"; but here in the next-episode preview, the kanji for "bo" is changed to 没, which means "death". In the original novel, the main character Botchan is reckless and mischievous; but here, his childhood adventures all seem to have a morbid bent.



# EPISODE 4

## MAKE A WISH

As the episode begins, we see Chiri and Kafuka all dressed up for the Tanabata Festival. Tanabata is a Japanese celebration based around the story of Orihime and Hikoboshi, two deities separated by the Milky Way. But it's said that once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh month, the two are allowed to meet.



To celebrate Tanabata, people write heartfelt wishes on colorful strips of paper, and hang them from stalks of bamboo. We can see a bunch of them behind Chiri and Kafuka in the opening shot. However, since this is Zetsubou-sensei, you can be sure that they aren't just normal wishes. Here's what people have written:

- **Be Beautiful:** The way this is written in Japanese (“utsukushiku are”) makes it a clear reference to *Be Noble, Be Strong, Be Beautiful: Japan's Revival Begins with Amending the Constitution*, a book by Yoshiko Sakurai. You might remember her from her many cameo appearances in *Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei* season 1, usually on posters with “Blow up the oil fields” written on them.

- **Conquer Mankind -Giga Zombie:** Giga Zombie is a villain from the film *Doraemon: Nobita and the Birth of Japan*. Though it seems like Giga Zombie has mystical powers, in truth, he's just an ordinary man. He travelled back in time to strike fear into prehistoric humans, with the hopes of changing history to make himself king.

• **I want to be happy** -Ex-Koala: “Koala” here is actually referring to a Japanese comedian named Shinya Miyatani. Koala was his stage name. But in 2004, on the advice of a fortune teller, he changed his name to “Happy Happy”.

• **I’d like some iron** -Chin\*\*\* Man: The 2008 Summer Olympics were set to be held in Beijing, China, which meant that leading up to the games, there was a lot of construction going on there: new stadiums, hotels, train lines, etc. The demand for iron was exceptionally high. It even led to a spate of bizarre metal robberies in Japan - graveyard incense holders, copper construction wire, even playground slides were stolen, and then presumably sold in China. (And just in case it wasn’t obvious, the censored name of the wish-writer is “Chinese Man”.)

• **Please don’t let anything else happen** -Tsunku♂: Tsunku♂ (yes, the male symbol is part of his name) is the lead producer for several popular Hello! Project pop acts, including girl band Morning Musume. The mid-2000s were a tough time for him: Ai Kago got caught smoking at age 15, Nozomi Tsuji got pregnant (which meant she could no longer tour or perform), and Miki Fujimoto resigned after getting caught up in a dating scandal. So it seems only natural that Tsunku♂ would wish for smooth sailing in the year to come.

**"YOUR CELL PHONE STRAP IS RATHER  
FETCHING, KITSU-SAN."**



Her cell phone strap is a purple version of Anpanman, a popular anime character for kids. “Fetching” is an odd way to describe it.

**"LIKE FIXATING ON THE TEAM SPONSOR'S  
NAME MORE THAN THE SOCCER MATCH!"**

The jersey Nozomu’s looking at says “Binbo”, but it’s meant to be “Bimbo”, the name of an actual baked goods company in Mexico. It’s a large company which has sponsored several soccer teams in Mexico, Costa Rica, and even the US. In fact, when Bimbo first sponsored the Philadelphia Union in 2011, it caused a bit of a stir among sports reporters, since they weren’t sure how female fans would respond to jerseys with the word “BIMBO” emblazoned across the chest. But it went over well enough and, as of this writing, the sponsorship is still in effect.



## "OR WORRYING MORE ABOUT WHERE \*\*MUTAKU'S MUSTACHE IS IN A MOVIE!"

The censored name is "Kimutaku", short for Takuya Kimura. He rose to fame as a member of the popular boy band SMAP, and has since moved on to become a prolific TV and movie actor.

Speaking of which, the movie that Nozomu's complaining about is the 2006 film Love and Honor. In it, Takuya played a mustachioed samurai named Mimura Shinnojo.

## "OR FIXATING ON A SUSPECT'S NAME MORE THAN WHAT THEY'RE ACCUSED OF!"

To understand this joke, it takes a bit of knowledge about how kanji work.

Any given kanji can be read multiple different ways. For example, this kanji which means "tree" (木) can be pronounced "ki", "gi", "ko", "de", "boku", or "moku" depending on how it's being used. This aspect of kanji makes reading names in Japanese rather difficult, especially if it's a unique name that you don't see very often.

So when Nozomu is staring at the suspect's name (大木 宇宙太), he can't figure out how it's supposed to be pronounced. He's trying to read the first name (宇宙太), which should be "Uchuu-ta"... but that's a very uncommon name, so Nozomu's best guess is "Sorata", which is another valid way to read those kanji.

And just how do we know that the name should be read as "Uchuuta"? Because in 2003, a man named Uchuuta Suzuki was arrested in Saitama prefecture on multiple counts of groping girls and women. His name is written 鈴木 宇宙太, just one kanji different from the report on Nozomu's television.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TV 74,500 YEN



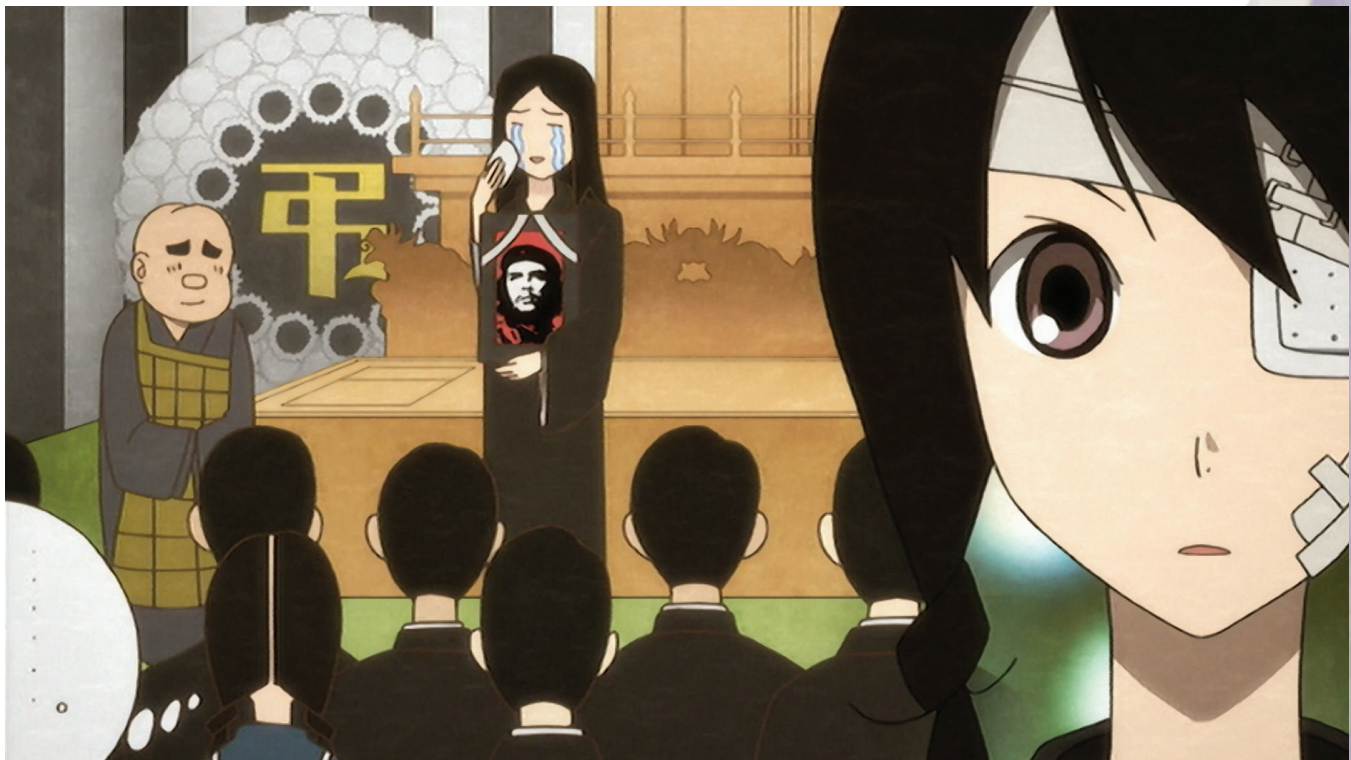
The TV for sale in the store window is based on an actual television. It's a Saga series TV, manufactured by Panasonic in 1965. They really did market it as an "Artificial Intelligence TV", since it used variable capacitance diodes in its tuning system.

By the way, "Terrestrial Broadcast Capable" simply means that it can pick up radio wave signals from TV station transmitters. In the US, it was more commonly known as "analog" television. However, that type of broadcast signal is no longer used here; in 2009, the FCC required all TV stations to move to digital transmissions. Japan followed suit not long after, and completely swapped to all-digital by 2012.

## I KNOW I'M HAP LIVE

Even though the poster text in the kitchen is partially obscured, we can see enough to know that it's "I Know I'm Happy", a song by Saeko Shuu. It aired back in 1993 on the NHK music show Minna no Uta ("Everyone's Song"). The lyrics are about a mother who realizes that, even though raising children can be hard, it has filled her heart with love. She knows that she's happy. This song was incredibly popular with mothers and housewives across the country, and has since become a staple at weddings.

## "THERE WAS A DEATH IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD RECENTLY."



When we see the dead man's picture at the funeral, it's a portrait of Argentinian revolutionary Che Guevara. Specifically, it's the stylized image of Che's face that was created by an Irish artist named Jim Fitzpatrick, which has since been printed on t-shirts, posters, banners, hats, and more. It's doubtful that a Marxist guerrilla fighter would have liked being turned into a fashion logo to be bought and sold, but that's what happened.

## "ANYWAY, PEOPLE CAN'T HELP BUT BE DISTRACTED BY THINGS OTHER THAN THE TOPIC AT HAND!"

And it's our first giant list of episode 4! Here are the items zooming across the screen in front of Nozomu:

- **A suspect's crime overshadowed by his obvious wig:** Hidetsugu Aneha was an architect who was arrested in 2006 for designing hundreds of buildings using falsified earthquake safety data to save on material costs. But the safety data wasn't the only thing that was fake. When people saw his pictures in the media, discussion went straight to the fact his hair looked like a wig - and eventually it was revealed that Hidetsugu actually was bald.

- **Caring less about a female astronaut, and more about her husband with the mustache:** Chiaki Mukai is a (now retired) astronaut with JAXA, the Japanese equivalent of NASA. She's also a physician, and has held positions like Assistant Professor in the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery at Keio University, and Vice President of the Tokyo University of Science. Basically, she's



a very interesting person with a lot of life experience under her belt. But for whatever reason, her husband Makio Mukai, an affable medical scientist with a bob haircut and mustache, has captured more of the public's attention.

- **E\*\*zou's crazy life is more interesting than his kabuki:** This is referring to kabuki actor Ichikawa Ebizou. There's a joke at play here... Most people know about kabuki, the classical form of Japanese theater. But there's a similar Japanese word, "kabukimono", which means "strange" or "crazy". So the pun here is that Ebizou's kabukimono life is more interesting than his kabuki.

- **Caring more about the anime OP's chart ranking than the anime itself:** Many songs used as anime openings show up on the Oricon Singles charts, Japan's music popularity ranking service.

- **Baseball eclipsed by handkerchiefs:** This is another reference to Yuuki Saito, the Handkerchief Prince.

- **Golf eclipsed by shyness:** Yuuki Saito isn't the only "Prince". Ryo Ishikawa, a professional golfer, won the Munsingwear Open KSB Cup at the age of 15. Because of his young age and boyish good looks, the mass media dubbed him The Bashful Prince.

- **Caring more about the expert who only shows up after disasters rather than the disaster itself:** Whenever something tragic happens, such as a train crash or a military accident, it's a common occurrence on Japanese television to bring in "experts" to talk about the incident. However, their true function is usually to be a strong personality that will inspire people to keep watching.

- **Paying more attention to Be\*\*ham's high-pitched voice than his face:** David Beckham is a famous soccer player from the UK. He was the first English player to win league titles in four different countries; some consider him a global ambassador for the sport. As such, millions of people around the world have had a chance to hear his voice, which some consider to be strangely high for a man of his build.

- **Distracted from the movie's plot by the price of gas at Y\*\*\*\* \*\*ra's gas station:** The censored name is the actor "Yuuya Yagira", and the movie is Sugar and Spice. In the film, Yuuya Yagira's character Shiro works at a gas station. The price of gasoline in the movie was listed as 125 yen per liter - but when this film released, Japan (along with rest of the world) was seeing a spike in gas prices due to tensions in the Middle East. The actual price at the pump kept setting new all-time high records, going up to 144 yen per liter in August of 2006.

- **Can't concentrate on the homemade bento she made for me because of the newspaper it's wrapped in:** This isn't tied to anything specific. It's a hypothetical situation where a cute girl has made a homemade lunch for someone, but the newspaper she wrapped it in is something troubling, like the newsletter for a cult or flyers from an extreme political party.

- **Caring more about beating Japan than about how you're viewed by the rest of the world:** Japan and South Korea have had a strained relationship for a very long time. The history of the two countries is long and complicated, but current-day tensions mostly stem from disputes about Japan's actions during World War II. In 2014, the results of a BBC World Service poll showed that 37% of Japanese people viewed South Korea negatively, and a staggering 79% of South Koreans viewed Japan negatively. This tension has bled over into everything from politics to tourism to sporting events.

- **Watching Johnny's more than the volleyball:** The FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup is held every four years. It's a big event featuring players from all over the

world, and since 1977, it has always been hosted in Japan. “Johnny’s”, meanwhile, refers to Johnny & Associates, a Japanese talent agency with huge pull in the Japanese entertainment industry. Several big-name bands represented by Johnny’s have made their debut performing at the Volleyball World Cup, including V6 (in 1995), Arashi (in 1999), NEWS (in 2003), and Hey! Say! JUMP (in 2007). It’s no stretch to say that many fans in the audience are there for the music more than the volleyball.

• **A female guest at a wedding focusing on the groom more than the ceremony:** Again, this isn’t anything specific. It’s a hypothetical situation where someone in the crowd isn’t thinking about well-wishes for the couple... Instead, she’s thinking, “He should have married me!”

## ROADSIDE ARTIST

This title is a play on Roadside Stone, a serialized novel by the author and playwright Yuuzou Yamamoto. He started it in 1937, but ultimately it was never finished.

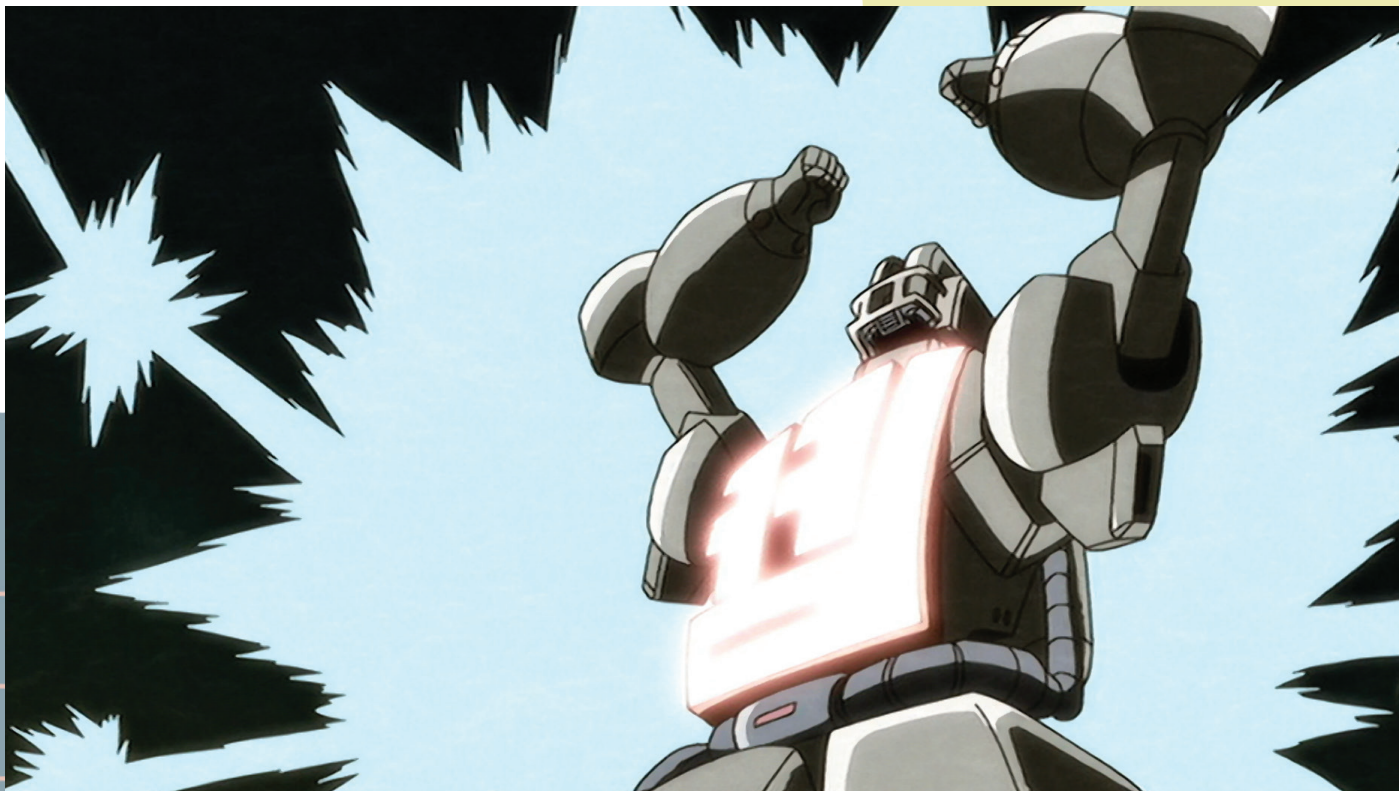
## A FAMILIAR SHIP



When the El Niñoans arrive to conquer Earth, they descend from the sky in a black sphere with a giant eye on the front. This design is a nod to the Eye of Volger from Mitsuteru Yokoyama’s much-beloved manga/anime series Giant Robo. But that’s not the only homage built into this ship! It also has two downward-facing thrusters in the back, just like a Ball from Mobile Suit Gundam. What’s more, the control room is modeled after the cockpit of King Joe, a giant robot from the third Ultraman series, Ultraseven. King Joe was built by a race called the Alien Pedan, and not-so-coincidentally, at the start of Ultraseven, the Alien Pedan are only shown in silhouette.



## ROBOT FROM THE SKY

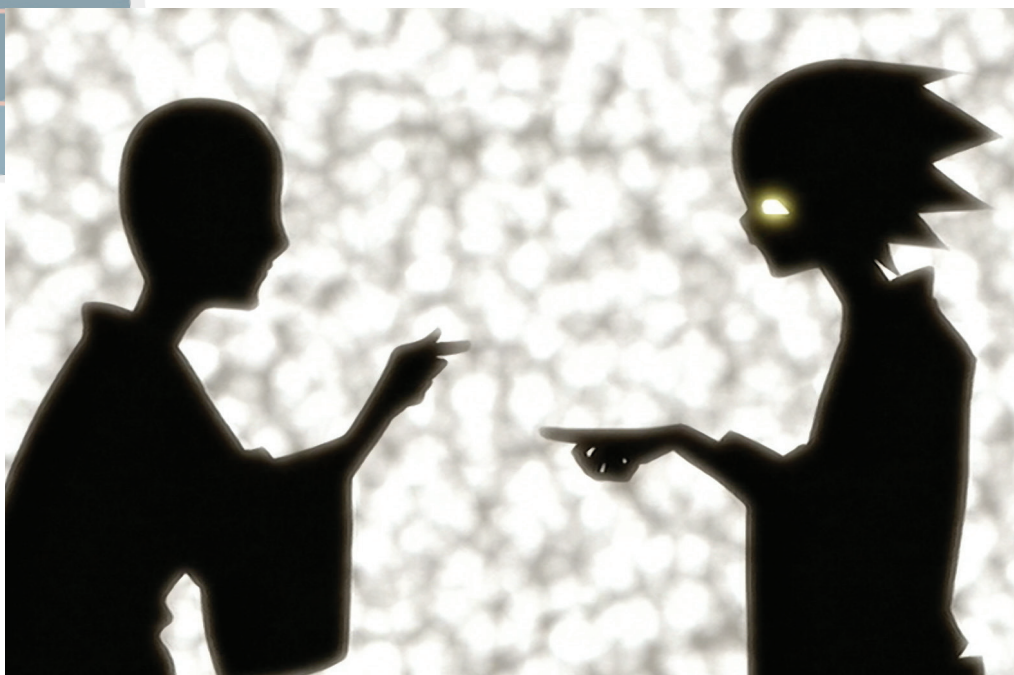


A door on the bottom of the spherical ship opens up, and a giant robot plunges to the ground. It then stands up, and raises its arms in a flexing motion, as electricity sparks all around it. This is an iconic pose struck by the robot from Tetsujin 28, another one of Mitsuteru Yokoyama's famous works.

### IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE

Fighter jets rush in to intercept the robot threat, and from the look of the wings, they seem to be American F-22 Raptors. What makes this a bit odd is that the US military banned sales of the F-22 Raptor; they couldn't be sold to any other country. Japan had made inquiries, and in 2007, there were hints that the ban might be lifted. But as of this writing, that specific fighter jet is still exclusive to the US.

**"OH! YOU'RE MY OLD FRIEND, UH..."**



When Nozomu greets his old friend, they're both in silhouette in front of a shimmering background. This is a spoof on a scene from the final episode of Ultraseven, where the hero Dan Moroboshi confesses to fellow Ultra Guard member Anne Yuri that he is, in fact, Ultraseven.

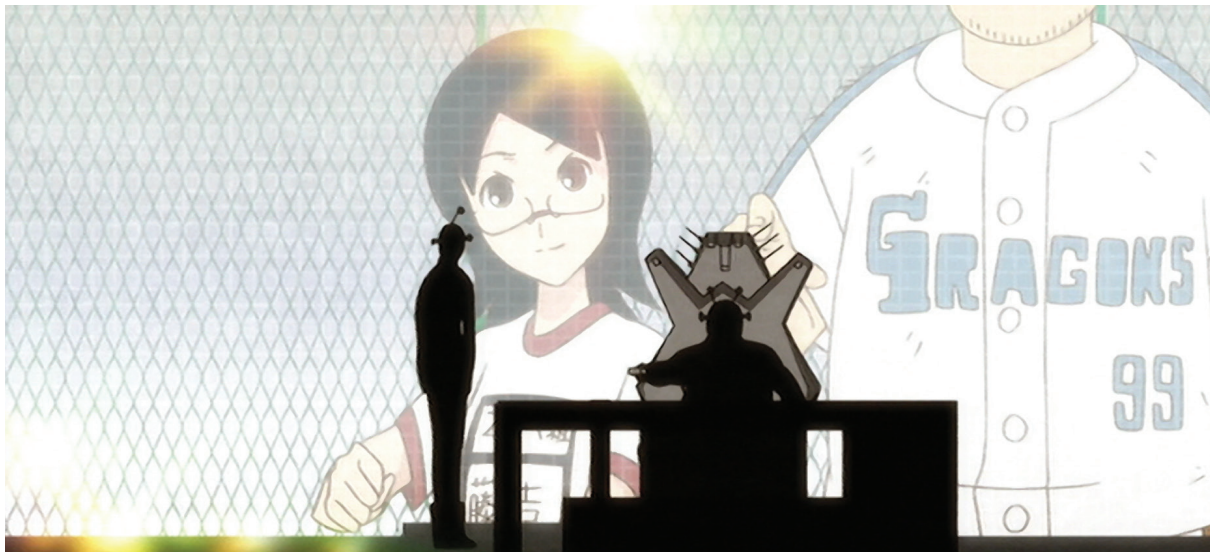
## FOLKTALES OF GREATER JAPAN

Nozomu's friend holds up a book called Folktales of Greater Japan, or Dai Nippon Mukashi Banashi in Japanese. This is a play on the title of a 1975 TV show called Manga Nippon Mukashi Banashi, which was a series of 10-minute retellings of Japanese folk tales like "Momotaro" or "The Story of Princess Kaguya".

## BATTING 1000

Harumi is practicing baseball at a place called the "Ozzie Batting Center". This is most likely a reference to Ozzie Smith, an American baseball player who played for the San Diego Padres, and later the St. Louis Cardinals. Though he was a great shortstop (he won the National League Gold Glove Award 13 seasons in a row), batting was not his strong suit. His career average, across 18 years, was .262.

**"YOU'VE GOT TALENT, KID. CARE TO JOIN MY TEAM?"**



The man who approaches Harumi is wearing a "Gragons" uniform, number 99. This is surely meant to be "Dragons", as in the Chunichi Dragons, and jersey #99 makes him Norihiro Nakamura. Nakamura was only with the Dragons for one year - from 2007 to 2008 - but in that time, the Dragons won the 2007 Japan Series, and Nakamura was named series MVP.

## RISE OF THE ROBOTS



When the El Niñoans send out their army of mecha, we can see that they all have a bird-like mark on their left shoulders. It's very close to the mark of the Grados Empire from Sunrise's 1985 mecha show Blue Comet SPT Layzner. In fact, the beefy robot with a claw for a left hand is specifically a spoof on one of the Gradosian robots, the Gashlan.



## **"IS THIS REALLY AN ULTIMATE WEAPON?"**



After a bit of digging, Nami finds a stone mask buried in the ground. Visually, it has the eyes and overall face shape of the hero's mask from Ultraseven, but the lush lips, vampire teeth, and fore-head ridge are a callback to the magical stone masks in JoJo's Bizarre Adventure.

## **"VACUUM DEPOSITION!"**

In the 1980s tokusatsu series Space Sheriff Gavan, the hero Gavan yells "Vacuum Deposition!" (jouchaku) to summon his metallic combat suit. (In real life, vacuum deposition is a method of applying coating to different materials, such as the mirror coating on a telescope lens.)

## **"TH-THIS IS THE POWER OF IDE?"**

Nozomu's friend sputters out this line, which is from the 1980 anime series Space Runaway Ideon. In the series, archaeologists working on a planet called Solo discover three tanks that can combine into an incredible mecha called the Ideon. The Ideon is powered by a mysterious force called "Ide", which turns out to be much stronger than the humans realize.

## **"THIS IS PRETTY CRAZY, BUT THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS TO TAKE OUT THE BAD GUYS!"**

The entire sequence that follows here is a spoof on the 1997 movie The End of Evangelion. Chiri jumps down a robot's throat, puts another one in a chokehold, cuts up another one with a giant knife... These are all moves that Asuka Langley Soryu pulls off in the Evangelion Unit-02 in The End of Evangelion. The Unit-02 also has a "Progressive Knife" that looks like a segmented utility blade, which is what Chiri's using. Then Chiri starts counting her kills in German ("Erste! Zweite! Dritte!"), since Asuka's heritage is half-German. And as the cherry on top, when the robots are defeated, they make cross-shaped explosions, just like in Evangelion.

## **"WESTERN PANTIES UNDER JAPANESE CLOTHING? HOW TACKY!"**

Until relatively recently, women didn't wear western-style underwear under their kimono. The traditional undergarment was a koshimaki, a strip of fabric that was something like a cross between a loincloth and a slip. However, in the late 1930s, loose pants called monpe became fashionable among women, which meant that koshimaki had to go. Western-style panties took their place, and ever since then, most women have swapped to that style of underwear no matter what they're wearing - even kimono.

## **"ERUPTING GOLD FINGER!"**

Chiri's right hand begins to glow, and she shouts out "Erupting Gold Finger!" as she grabs an enemy robot's face and blows up its head. This whole sequence is an homage to the 1994 anime series Mobile Fighter G Gundam. In that show, Domon Kasshu, the hot-headed pilot of the God Gundam, has a move called the Erupting God Finger. Power is concentrated in the Gundam's palm, which Domon then uses to destroy the enemy's head, since any suit whose head is destroyed is instantly disqualified from battle.

## **1,000 ENEMIES DESTROYED**

When this text appears on screen, it's a play on the Dynasty Warrior video game series. Those games are famous for throwing hundreds of enemies at you at once, and flashing up notifications every time you defeat 100... 200... 300... etc.

## **"WHAT DO YOU THINK? I AM A TRUE WARRIOR OF THE THREE KINGDOMS!"**



And here we have Mobile Fighter G Gundam and Dynasty Warrior references mixed together. The line she's saying is from Dynasty Warriors; it's said once you've beaten 1,000 enemies. Meanwhile, her pose as she points to the sky while standing on the remains of defeated robots is a shot from G Gundam. It's the victory pose for the winner of the Gundam Fight, the one who will be crowned with the title "Gundam of Gundams".



## A RAY OF HOPE

Once Chiri notices the El Niñoans, she brings her arms together and fires an energy ray that destroys their ship. Although her stance is a little different, it's clear she's using the Ultra Beam from the Ultraman series. Every iteration of Ultraman has the ability to fire a beam of energy, usually from their linked arms.

## STRIKE A POSE



Now Chiri, still a giant, is standing with her arms crossed. When it comes to anime, this particular intimidating stance is known among Japanese fans as the Gainax Pose, for how often it has appeared in works by the studio. The English-speaking fandom often calls it the Gunbuster Pose, named after its dramatic appearance in episode 4 of the Gunbuster OVA.

## WE RELOCATED TO SANNOMIYA CENTER-GAI IN 1976...

This next set of Lupin-style text is the actual story of how the Japanese bookstore chain Junkudo got its name. (And if you recall, this store is where Nozomu's book-loving student Kudou Jun gets his name from, as well.)

## ORIGINAL STORIES

Right after the title card, we're shown a shelf full of books. The titles of these books ("Decorations at Tiffany's", "Obligations and Soldiers", etc.) are all episodes titles from Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei.

## RAINY DAYS

Keep an eye on the books that Kudou reads throughout this story. Starting with "Rainy Days", he's reading through (a spoof of) a children's book series called Arashi no Yoru ni ("One Stormy Night"). It's the story of a goat and a wolf who both take refuge from a storm by hiding in a mountain hut. It's dark inside the hut, so the two can't see each other, but as they talk, they become friends. After the storm,

once each realizes who the other is, they try to keep their friendship a secret from their respective clans.

These are the books Kudou ends up reading (though he's reading them out of series order. For shame, Kudou!):

- Doshaburi no Hibi - "Rainy Days" (the real book's title is Doshaburi no Hi ni, "On That Rainy Day")
- Kiri no Mukade - "The Foggy Centipede" (the real title is Kiri no Naka de, "Within the Fog")
- En no Kirema ni - "A Break in the Relationship" (the real title is Kumo no Kirema ni, "A Break in the Clouds")
- Aru Hareta Hibi - "Sunny Days" (the real title is Are Hareta Hi ni, "On That Sunny Day")
- Fubuki no Anta - "Your Cold Demeanor" (the real title is Fubuki no Ashita, "A Snowstorm Tomorrow")

## **WILL KOTARO BREAK THROUGH?**

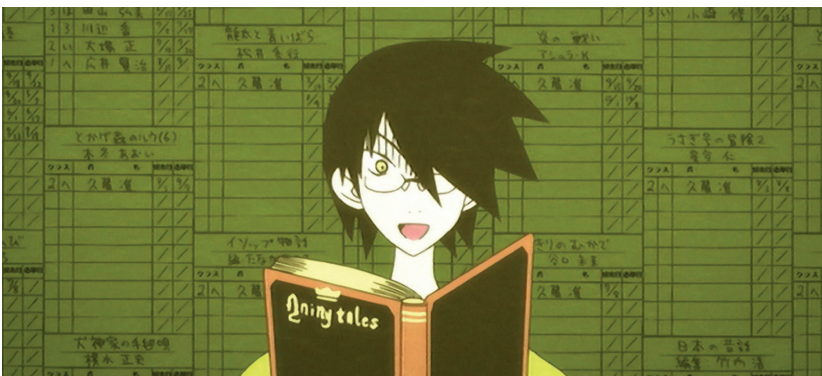
This book that Nozomu hides behind is a spoof on an actual 1980s manga named Kotaro Break-through. The real manga is about a high-school karate master named Kotaro; but in Nozomu's version, it seems like Kotaro's fighting prowess might still be in question.

## **REPEAT CUSTOMERS**

At Kudou's suggestion, Nozomu decides to check out a book. But no matter which book he picks, Kudou has already read it first. This is a nod to Whisper of the Heart, a 1995 Studio Ghibli film based on a 1989 manga by Aoi Hiiragi. It's the story of Shizuku, a girl who loves to read and write. Upon looking through her library books, she notices that all of them were previously checked out by a boy named Seiji Amasawa.

The homage in Zetsubou-sensei goes even deeper than this, though. All four books that Nozomu holds up are books that Shizuku checked out (with the exception of "Hamburg Red", which was "Poe of Hamburg" in Whisper of the Heart). On the check-out cards for the first and last books, we can see that the author's name is: 木冬あおい. If you combine the first two kanji into one, you get: 柊あおい, which is Aoi Hiiragi, the author of Whisper of the Heart. Also, Seiji Amasawa, the boy from Whisper of the Heart, apparently checked out "Hamburg Red" right after Kudou did.

## **"EVERY LAST BOOK I'VE TRIED TO READ HAS ALREADY BEEN READ!"**



As Nozomu says this, the background is filled with library check-out cards. Some are unreadable, and some are for books we've already seen, but there are a few new ones in there, too:

- "Hary Potr" by J. Rowling (A play on the "Harry Potter" series by J.K. Rowling.)



• **“The Inugami’s Ballad” by Seishi Yokomizu** (“Seishi Yokomizu” is written 横水正史, but if you change one of the kanji, you get Seishi Yokomizo (横溝 正史), who is an actual author. He wrote several famous mystery stories, including “The Inugami Clan” and “The Devil’s Ballad”, which have been mashed into one title here.)

• **“Ryuuta and the Blue Rose” by Hide\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*bara** (The censored name is “Hideyuki Matsubara”, an author who specializes in children’s literature. Though it’s spelled differently here, “Ryuuta and the Blue Rose” is the actual name of one of Hideyuki’s works.)

• **“Aesop’s Fables” by \*\*\*\*\* Tanaka** (The censored name is “Seiji Tanaka”, and this is referring to a music album, not a book. Seiji Tanaka is a vocal artist, and in 1973, he worked together with the poet Shuji Terayama to release a CD called “Aesop’s Fables”).

• **“Battle of Flames” by Asura K.** (“Asura K.” is written アシユラ・K, but if you add a long vowel mark, you get アーシユラ・K, which is “Ursula K.”, as in the author Ursula K. LeGuin. The title “Battle of Flames” is Honoo no Tatakai in Japanese, a fiery Asuran twist on Ursula K. LeGuin’s novel A Wizard of Earthsea, which was released in Japan as “Battle with Shadows” (Kage to no Tatakai).)

## ***“READING PITCHES AS WELL AS SKIPPER NOMURA!”***

“Nomura” here refers to Katsuya Nomura, a man who was a baseball player for 26 years, and then a baseball manager for the next 24. His last position before he retired was as manager of the Rakuten Golden Eagles (which you can tell here by his “hair” (毛) cap - remember the very first episode of season one?).

The Eagles’ first season was in 2004, and they had a tough time of it; they were the first team in 40 years to lose more than 90 games in one season. So for 2005, they hired on Katsuya Nakamura. Bit by bit, he was able to turn things around for the team. In 2009, Nakamura’s last season before he retired, the Eagles won second place in their league.

## ***“READING GREENS AT THE MASTERS!”***

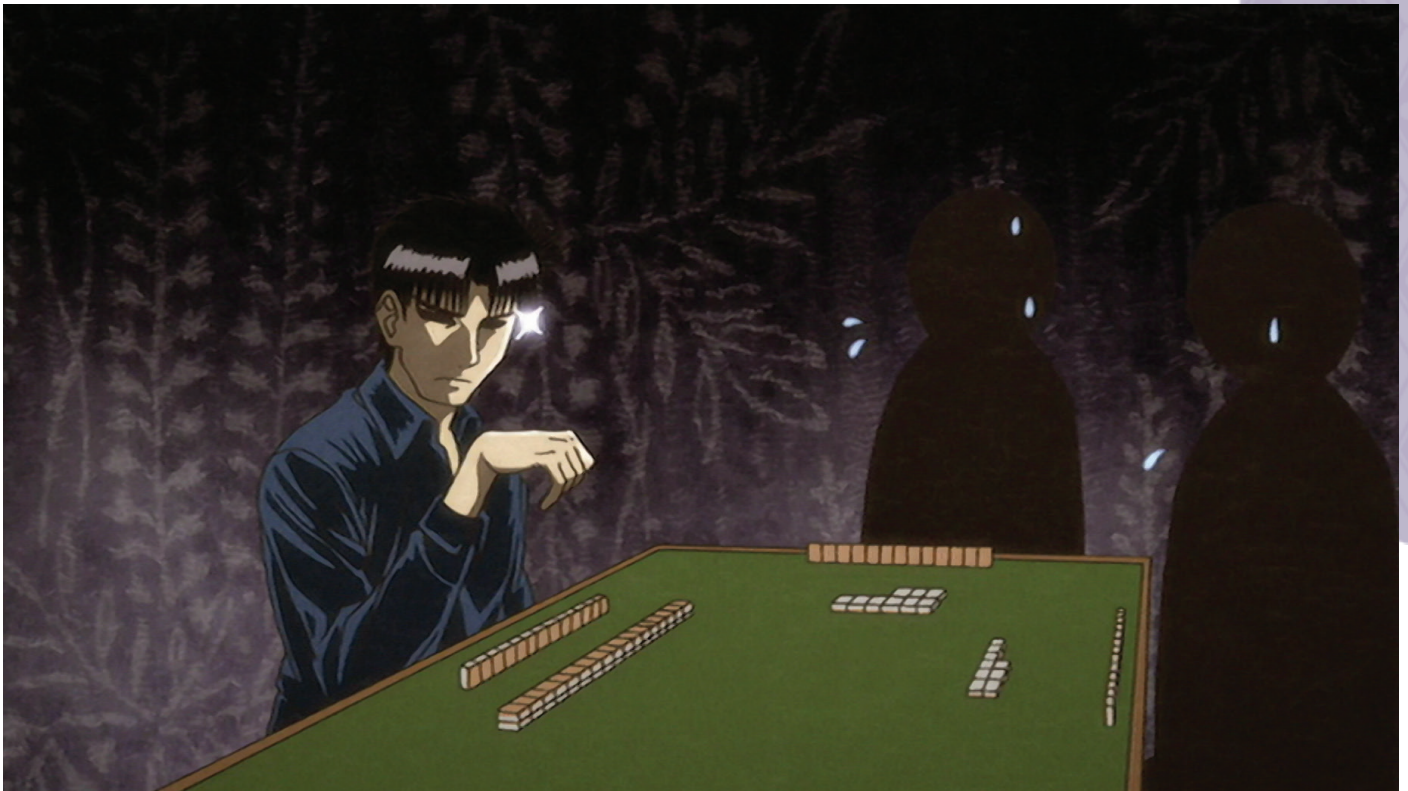
The golf ball in this shot says “Saru”. This is a reference to Pro Golfer Saru, a manga by Fujiko A. Fujio. It’s the story of a wild boy who looks like a monkey, but is shockingly good at golf. He gets into all sorts of golf-themed misadventures, and plays against villains like Red Scorpio, King Cesar, and Mr. X.

## ***“READING POLLING TRENDS ON ELECTION NIGHT!”***

Next, we’re shown a list of candidates for the Liberal Democratic Party, and one of them is “Jun’ichiro Ooizumi”. The first two kanji in his last name, ooizumi, mean “big fountain”. But if you swap out the “big” kanji for “little”, you get koizumi - the name of former Prime Minister of Japan, Jun’ichiro Koizumi.

There’s also a piece of paper off to the left, which says “Horie unconfirmed”. This is referring to Takafumi Horie, the founder of Livedoor. In August of 2005, Takafumi contemplated running for office as an LDP candidate, but eventually he ran as an Independent. He lost the election and went back to Tokyo to run his business... Then a few short months later, he was arrested and charged with securities fraud.

## **"READING THE FLOW OF A MAHJONG GAME!"**



The man in the blue shirt sitting at the mahjong table is Tetsuya Asada, from the 1997 manga series *The Legend of the Gambler: Tetsuya*. It's set in postwar Japan, when the economy is struggling. Tetsuya discovers he has a talent for mahjong, and uses that skill to gamble for money.

## **YOU CAN READ GREENS THAT NOT EVEN SAKURA YOKOMINE'S DAD COULD READ! YOU'RE GOOD!**

Sakura Yokomine is a professional golfer, and her first win was at the Life Card Ladies' Tournament in April of 2005. She was 19 years old at the time, and her father, politician Yoshiro Yokomine, was her caddy. Nozomu's line here is a backhanded compliment; in 2007, Yoshiro Yokomine was accused of making large sums of money by betting on his own golf games.

## **"YOU READ ELECTION TRENDS NOT EVEN FORMER DIET MEMBER OKADA COULD READ! AMAZING!"**

Katsuya Okada was President of the Democratic Party of Japan (the main opposition to the Liberal Democratic Party). He took the office in 2004, and the DPJ had a great showing in the upper house election. But their success was short-lived - in the 2005 general election, Jun'ichiro Koizumi lead the LDP to a landslide victory, surprising everyone involved. It was such a crushing defeat that Katsuya Okada resigned as the DPJ's president. (So yes, in case you were wondering, this is also a backhanded compliment.)

## **KOIBANA BLACK**

Koibana started out as a cell phone novel, a type of story written on cell phones and distributed via text messaging. Eventually it was published in book form, and there were two volumes: *Koibana Red* and *Koibana Blue*. Nozomu seems to have found another version called "*Koibana Black*". Sounds rather dark...



## "ISN'T IT TOO EARLY FOR \*\*\*\* ADACHI TO KNOW SHE'S TWO MONTHS PREGNANT?"

Nozomu is thinking about a story that happened in 2005. Yumi Adachi, a Japanese actress and vocal artist, had been going out with an actor named Arthur Kuroda. However, she broke off the relationship, and then five months later, married comedian Jun Itoda. That same day, she held an interview session and announced that she was two months pregnant.

If you're wondering how being two months pregnant means "only missing one period", it's because in Japan, the length of a pregnancy is measured based on the first day of the woman's last menstrual cycle, rather than on the actual date of conception. So a woman who is "two months pregnant" has only missed one period. However, skipping a menstrual cycle can happen for many reasons other than pregnancy. That's why Nozomu is so suspicious.

## ALCHEMY BY ANITA

This book that Kafuka is reading is a reference to Anita Alvarado, a woman commonly known as "The Chilean Geisha".

She was born in Chile in 1972, and in her late teens, poverty drove her to work in brothels. She eventually moved to Japan and engaged in prostitution there, and in 1997, she met Yuji Chida, an accountant with the Aomori Housing Cooperative. He showered her with money, but he was also abusive. The two ended up getting married back in Chile, but he would only visit her there three months out of the year.

Then, in 2001, everything came crumbling down for Yuji Chida. He was arrested for defrauding the Aomori Housing Cooperative out of \$11 million. However, Anita Alvarado was allegedly unaware of this, so it became a ticket to stardom for her, both in Chile and Japan. For the most part, she got to keep her lavish lifestyle, and she gained the attention of the press and the media, which led to movie roles and a singing career. She even wrote a book, though it wasn't called "Alchemy". But it was her biography, so you could say it was the story of turning something common into gold.

## THE CENSORED SECTION



All the shelves in the library are marked with what genre of books they hold, like "Science Fiction" or "Philosophy". But in one particular shot, the shelf signs are censored, because they're supposed to be the names of different manga companies. The one behind Nozomu's head is too obscured to read, but the other two shelves near Kafuka are meant to be "Shogakukan" and "Kodansha".

## **"OR CONNING OLD PEOPLE INTO INSTALLING LOTS OF VENT FANS UNDER THEIR FLOOR!"**

Most of Kafuka's examples of "thoughtlessness" are self-explanatory, but this one might be less known. Wood houses in humid environments usually need some kind of ventilation system under the floor, to help keep moisture away from the floor supports. Japan is a rather humid country, so underfloor ventilation isn't a bad idea. However, some scam artists will recommend excessive amounts of ventilation as a way to grift money from unknowing homeowners. Not only does it cost more, but it can also cause worse damage in the long run by drying out the mortar in the house's foundation.

## **I'M ON TOP OF THIS BOOKSHELF -TENMA**

This is a note from Dr. Kenzo Tenma, the main character in Naoki Urasawa's popular 1994 manga *Monster*. At one point in the story, Dr. Tenma plans to assassinate someone with a rifle, and his hiding spot is on top of a bookshelf at the school library.

## **THE MOUSE'S LEGAL FILING**

I think we all know a certain company with a mouse for a mascot that makes a whole lot of legal claims.

## **DIARY OF USUI KAGERO THE FIRST STORM OF SPRING**

This whole sequence is a spoof on a famous 1973 commercial for Ryukakusan brand lozenges. In the original commercial, it's raining out, and a boy is walking home with umbrella in hand. A girl passes by from the opposite direction, sneezing from the cold. He goes to offer her a lozenge, but he isn't fast enough, and she walks away without taking one. Yet at the same time, we hear the boy say that he gave her one of his Ryukakusan lozenges and walked with her all the way home, which made her very happy. At the end of his fictitious story, the boy says, "I think that's how I'll write it up in my diary!"

## **EHIME PREFECTURE. TYPE A. T=165, B=84, W=55, H=85.**

These are all statistics for Majiru's favorite real-life blog star, Kaori Manabe. She was born in Ehime Prefecture, her blood type is A, she's 165 cm tall (~5'4"), her bust measurement is 84cm (33.1"), her waist is 55cm (21"), and her hips are 85cm (33.5").

## **SUMMER OF THE USUME**

This title is a spoof on Natsuhiko Kyogoku's 1994 novel *Summer of the Ubume*. In Japanese folklore, an "ubume" is the spirit of a woman who died in childbirth. An "usume", meanwhile, is someone who is thin. Like, say, Kiri.

## **IT'S ANKLE-SPRAINING GOOD CHA-O**

In 1997, the Japanese variety show *How Does Wednesday Sound?* recorded a segment called "Total Domination of 21 European Countries". Two of the hosts flew to Paris, got a rental car, and did their best to sightsee 21 countries across Europe in 8 days. In the end, due to all sorts of misadventures and shenanigans, they only made it to 13 of the 21 countries.



Later, in 2006, the idea was revisited, this time as “Total Domination of 20 European Countries”. (Ireland was removed from the list due to its distance from everywhere else they were going.) They started out in Rome this time, and the director was having trouble saying the Italian greeting “ciao”. One of the other actors, You Ooizumi, told him to think of it like cha, the Japanese word for tea. “Cha-o!”

As for being “ankle-spraining good”, on their very first full day in Rome, the director went out for an early morning jog and ended up spraining his ankle.

## **“WHAT’S SO GREAT ABOUT THAT STUPID GUY FROM KIRIN ANYHOW?!”**

“That stupid guy” is Akira Kawashima, half of the comedy duo Kirin. He dated Kaori Manabe for a while, though the two didn’t stay together.

## **“IS THIS GAG TOO OLD FOR YOU?”**

Kiri is referring to the pose she’s making, with her arms held at an angle that pushes her chest together. It’s the signature pose of a female comedy duo from the late 90s named Pirates. Both girls were swimsuit models, and the punchline of their jokes usually involved them making this pose and saying their catchphrase, “dacchu no”.

## **ZEN-ZA-REN GENERAL MEETING**

“Zen-za-ren” is short for the Zenkoku Zashiki-warashi Renmei (“The Nationwide Zashiki-warashi Alliance”). If you remember from season one, Kafuka claimed that Kiri was a zashiki warashi - a spirit child who can’t leave, or the house will fall into disrepair.

## **PICO**

From the way she’s teasing Majiru, we’re given the sense that Kiri has a thing for younger boys. With that in mind, Pico is the main character in Boku no Pico, an infamous hentai OVA starring a very young-looking boy.

## **PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE**

Pay attention to where this shows up in the shot, because the text on the blackboard here will be different every time we come back to this scene. Each time it changes, it will be a different yo-jijukugo - a popular turn-of-phrase made using four kanji. And thankfully, each one has a well-known English equivalent.

## **KIRI’S BOOK COLLECTION**

Kiri’s reading material doesn’t do much to dispel any worries about her preferences. They’re almost all books that involve young boys. From left to right, there’s:

- **Labyrinth:** A reference to Fantastic Detective Labyrinth, the anime and manga series starring a genius 12-year-old boy.
- **How to Break the Seed:** “Breaking the seed” is a term fans use to describe the moment when characters in Gundam SEED enter a state of hyper awareness, which is represented by the image

of a seed breaking apart.

- **Pat's Secret vols. 1+2:** This refers to Pat Campbell, a character from Infinite Ryvius. Though the rest of the characters are all space cadets in training, Pat is just an 8-year-old boy who gets caught up in the story when he goes to space to visit his father.
- **The Negi Picture Book:** Negi Springfield, the main character in Negima! Master Negi Magi, is a 10-year-old boy assigned to teach a class of middle school girls.



- **Future Detective Conan vols. 1+2:** This is a mashup of two different anime series, Hayao Miyazaki's Future Boy Conan, and the mystery series Detective Conan. They're very different stories, but they both star young boys: an 11-year old in Future Boy Conan, and a high school student shrunk into the body of a six-year-old in Detective Conan.
- **The History of the Nationwide Zashiki-warashi Alliance:** Kiri is assumed to be a Zashiki-warashi, as mentioned a couple liner notes ago.

## AOFUKU WHITE DARK MAN

These two signs are spoofs on the names of two actual types of sweets: "Akafuku" and "Shiroi Koibito". Akafuku is a rice cake covered with a thick layer of sweet red bean paste. Meanwhile Shiroi Koibito (which means "White Lover") is a European sandwich cookie with white chocolate in the center. Both of these sweets made the news in 2007 when their respective manufacturers were both caught violating Japan's Food Hygiene Law by falsifying their "best before" dates.

By the way, if you're wondering how "White Lover" became "White Dark Man", it's that the name Shiroi Koibito is written like this: 白い恋人. But for the poster on the wall in Kiri's room, the third kanji has been changed: 白い濃い人. It's still pronounced "shiroi koibito", but the "koi" here means "dark" - not as in the absence of light, but rather in the sense of a color that is deep and rich.



## **"WHO CARES HOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO EAT A CHOCOLATE CORNET?!"**

This is a reference to a famous scene from the 2007 anime Lucky Star. The very first episode features a (very long) conversation about the mechanics of eating chocolate cornets. And cream puffs. And strawberry shortcake. It doesn't have anything to do with anything, which is why Majiru compares it to Kiri's odd statements about anpan and melon pan.

## **CHICO**

Chico is another character from the hentai OVA Boku no Pico. He's even younger than Pico.

## **COCO**

And finally, CoCo is yet another character from Boku no Pico. He is, of course, another young-looking boy.

## **INCREASE**

According to Maria's chart, pointless stories are popular; and in 2007, it seemed like the number of them was only going up-.young-looking boy.

## **THE RESTAURANT OF MANY CONDOLENCES**

This next episode preview is a spoof on Kenji Miyazawa's story "The Restaurant of Many Orders". (The Japanese word for "order" is chuumon, while "condolences" is choumon.) As mentioned in a previous liner note, two exhausted hunters find a restaurant in the middle of the forest. They think "many orders" refers to the restaurant's popularity, but actually, they're being tricked into following "many orders" so that they can be devoured.

## **"BURY YOURSELVES IN SAND TO COUNTER THE POISON."**

Burying oneself in sand is actually an old traditional remedy for blowfish poisoning. However, it doesn't work. At all. There is no known antidote for blowfish poison. But victims can sometimes survive, if they make it to the hospital quickly enough.

# EPISODE 5

## TEAM PLAY

Since this text is displayed Lupin the 3rd style, it's only fitting that this is a Lupin the 3rd reference! Episode 137 of Lupin the 3rd Part Two is called "The Magnificent Team Play Operation", and Lupin's gang has to work together to steal a diamond called Cleopatra's Tear. It's considered an all-time classic episode in Japan. (The double-reference is that this episode deals with Sports Festivals, which literally involve team play.)

## CLASS 3-B ASAI



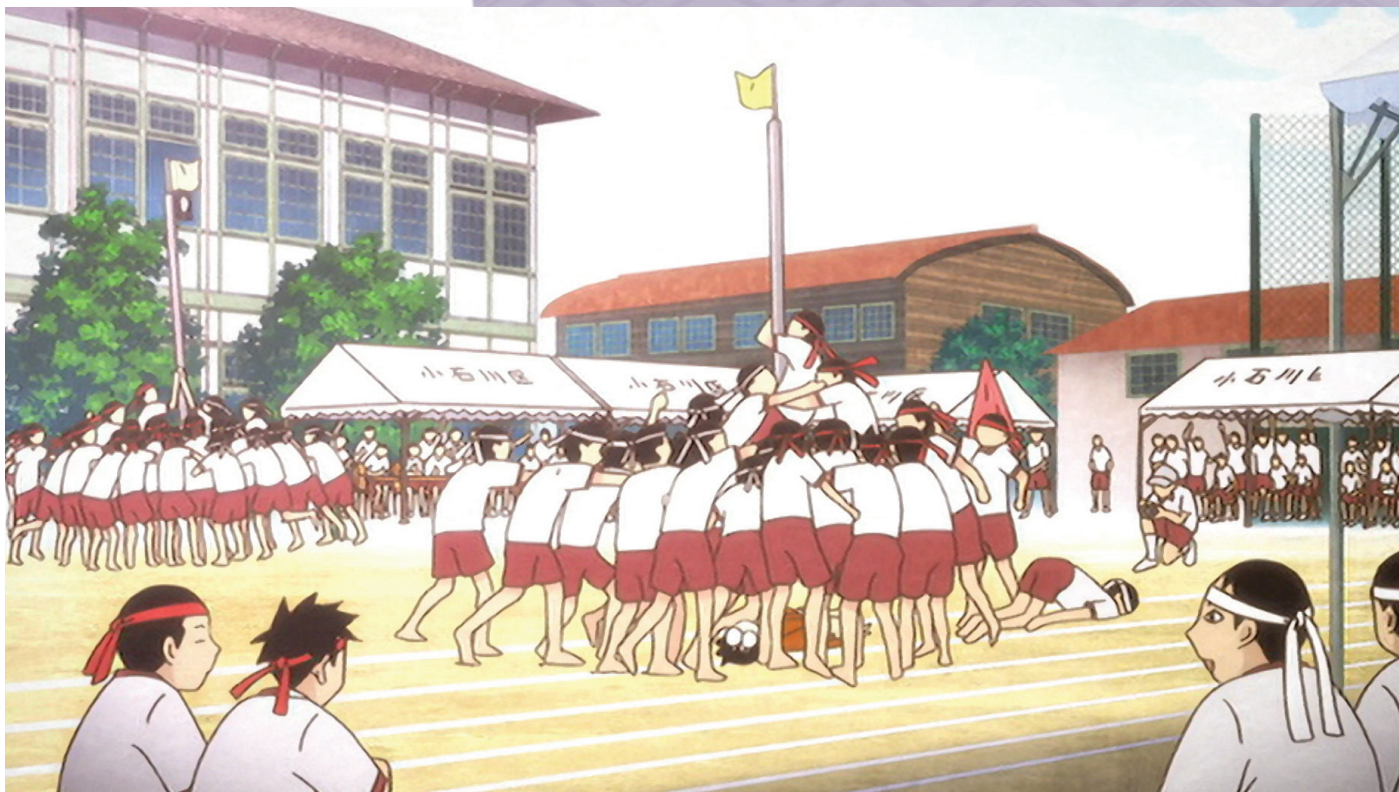
There is no "Class 3-B" at Nozomu's school, which uses the Iroha sequence to name their classes (his class is Class 2-He, for example). Instead, this is a reference to a popular TV drama called Mr. Kinpachi in Class 3-B. (The show was about a junior high school, so the "Class 3" in this instance is the third year of junior high, or what we would call 9th Grade in the US.)

The show ran from 1979 all the way to 2011, and dealt with a lot of the tough social issues that can well up in junior high school, such as gender dysphoria, suicide, and teenage pregnancy. "Asai" here is surely meant to be Yukino Asai, a character from the very first season of the show. She has sex with another student and ends up pregnant at age 15, but although the teachers pressure her to get an abortion, she doesn't want to end her child's life. In the end, the teachers relent, and give their support to Yukino.

This storyline was shocking for a television show in 1979, and the storyline didn't pull any punches or sugarcoat the situation. But that focus on tough issues is part of what made the show so popular.



## IN A BAD PLACE



In the next shot, we see two giant groups of people gathered around two poles. This is a game called bou-taoshi, often played at sports festivals. There are two teams, each subdivided into a group of “attackers” and “defenders”. The defenders on each team surround their pole, and do their best to keep it from falling over. Meanwhile, the attackers on each team run in and do everything they can to wrestle their opponent’s pole to the ground.

It’s a very physical sport, to be sure. And if you look closely, near the base of the yellow team’s pole, you can see Chitan Tsubouchi from *Katte ni Kaizou* being crushed under many, many feet.

## THE PHASES OF THE WILDERNESS

This is the name of a song by FictionJunction Yuuka. It was used as the opening theme song for the 2006 net animation *Intrigue in the Bakumatsu - Irohanihoheto*.

## DE CULTURE

“Deculture” is a term from the classic anime series *Macross*. In that show, an alien race called the Zentradi use it to describe things that are “shocking” or “horrible”. (Eventually, in later installments of the series, humans adopt the word to describe things that are “fantastic” or “amazing”).

Of course, here in *Zetsubou-sensei*, there’s a space between “de” and “culture”, emphasizing the pun connection with “culture”.

## NOA

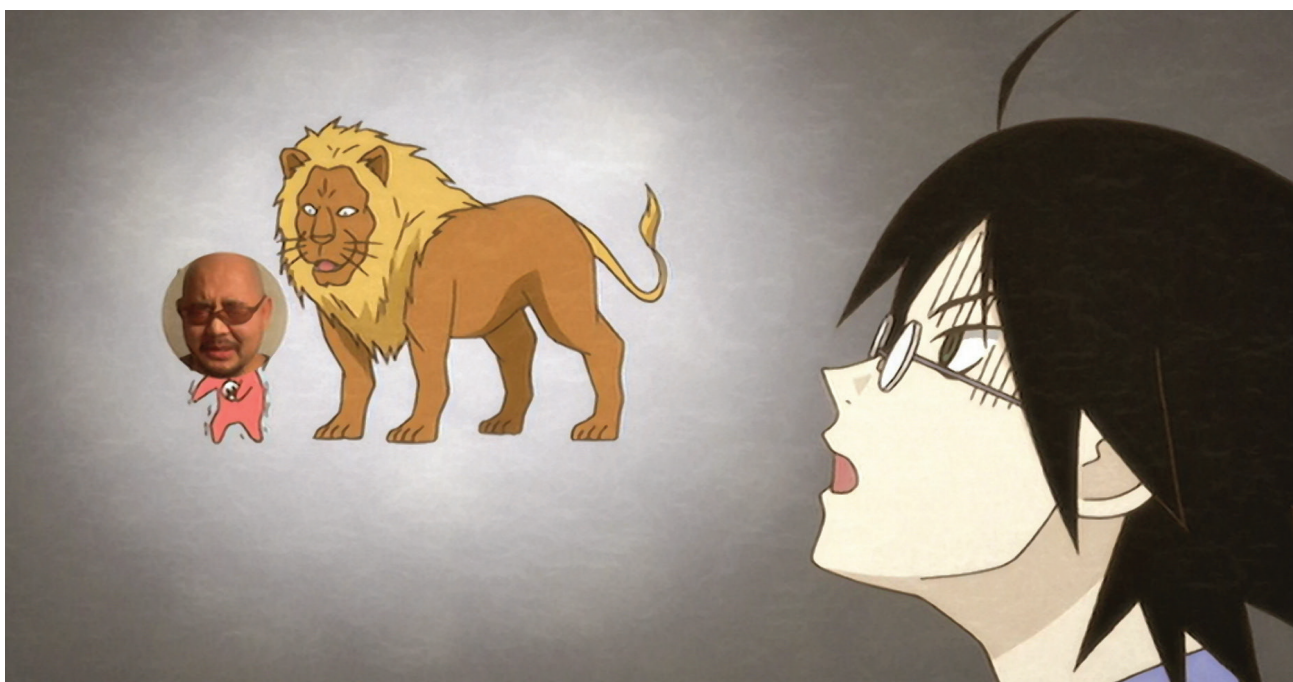
You might remember from a previous liner note that former Morning Musume star Nozomi Tsuji got pregnant in 2007, and had to put her career on hold. Her child was born that November, and the proud parents named their baby girl Noa.

There was just one problem. You might also remember from a previous liner note that kanji can be hard to read when it comes to names. Well, poor Noa was given just such a difficult name: 希空. This is a very non-standard kanji combination, to the point that no one was quite sure how to pronounce it.

### **"...THE RESULT WOULD BE HORRIFYING!"**

As Nozomu says this, three different wrestlers put Chitan Tsubouchi from *Katte ni Kaizou* through the wringer. Though their faces have been covered with pictures of Maeda-kun, these three muscle men are all from the wrestling manga series *Kinnikuman*. First up is Neptuneman with his Quarrel Bomber, next is Terryman using the Kinniku Buster, and finally there's Kinnikuman himself performing the Kinniku Driver.

### **"IT WOULD BE LIKE TOSSING A RABBIT WITH A PULLED MUSCLE INTO A LION'S CAGE!"**



The little pink rabbit in pajamas (with its face covered by Maeda-kun) is a spoof on the mascot for NOVA, a private English language school based out of Japan. NOVA started in August of 1981 as a way for people to learn English in a more robust way than they could through basic public education.

Business was good, and by 2003, NOVA had over 400,000 students across over 600 locations. But in 2007, it all came to a quick end. First, Japan's Supreme Court ruled that NOVA had broken the law when it refused to refund students who cancelled their contracts. Then the Trade and Economy Ministry forced NOVA to close some of its schools due to misleading advertising campaigns. This caused a dramatic decline in enrollment, which meant dramatically less money coming in, which meant NOVA was unable to pay its staff. That meant trouble for the company's over 4,000 foreign instructors, who lived in apartments paid for by the company. Suddenly they had no job and nowhere to live, and some couldn't even afford a plane ticket back to their home countries. By the end of the year, NOVA's stock was delisted, all their branches were closed, and the president of the company was removed.

So really, the metaphor of "a rabbit with a pulled muscle being tossed into a lion's cage" is a pretty apt description of how NOVA met its end.



## STUDY ABROAD NEAR THE STATION

This was one of NOVA's advertising slogans. NOVA schools were often located near train stations, for ease of access to students.

## RABBIT-MEAT CROQUETTE

The easiest reference here is the NOVA rabbit mascot being dead meat - but there's another angle to this. There was a second company that went bankrupt in 2007: Meat Hope, a meat processing company in Hokkaido. After a string of complaints and whistleblowing, an investigation revealed that Meat Hope had been padding their "100% beef" with all sorts of fillers like pork, mutton, innards, bread scraps, and yes, even rabbit. By August of 2008, the company had shuttered their doors completely.

**"AND WHOEVER BECOMES MY WIFE WILL SEE FAR WORSE THAN THAT."**



Nozomu is drawn a little differently here, and he's striking a peculiar pose. That's because this is a reference to the Studio Ghibli classic *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*, specifically a scene with Princess Kushana. When she reveals that her left arm is a prosthetic, her captors are shocked. But she only smirks and responds, "Whoever becomes my husband will see far worse than that."

## WHAT'S HARUMI READING NOW?

Harumi recognizes the Studio Ghibli joke that Nozomu just made - perhaps because she's currently reading a doujinshi about characters from Studio Ghibli movies. It's a story pairing up Haku from *Spirited Away* and Ashitaka from *Princess Mononoke*. Meanwhile, the blonde man with glasses who's panicking at what he just witnessed is Colonel Muska from *Castle in the Sky*.

(By the way, if the comic seems familiar, it's because it's the same as Harumi's *Gundam SEED* doujinshi from season 1 episode 7, just with the characters swapped out.)

**"WHEN 'HUMANITIES' PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN THEM, IT ALWAYS INVOLVES TERRIBLE DANGER!"**



As Nozomu says this, two shadowed figures are fighting in the background. Many anime fans can identify them on sight - they're Goku and Vegeta from Akira Toriyama's ever-popular series Dragon Ball.

### **THIS IS THE POWER OF CULTURE?**

This is another reference from the Macross series, specifically the 1984 movie Do You Remember Love? In the world of Macross, the Zentradi are a race of giant humanoids who exist only for war. Culture of any kind is expressly prohibited. However, when the Zentradi begin to attack humans, they find human expressions of culture (especially music) to be confounding and debilitating. One of the Zentradi commanders, Vrlitwhai7018, exclaims, "This is the power of culture?"

### **"A COMPETITION TO SEE WHO CAN GET THE LOWEST MORTGAGE RATE!"**



The image here is a bunch of people with their hands full of paperwork, running from one building to another. The buildings are all marked as generic banks, loan offices, and money changers... all except for two.



One of the banks has its name censored, but it's meant to be the Dai-Ichi Bank, which was once one of the largest banks in the world. During the bubble economy of the 1980s, Dai-Ichi knowingly granted over 30 billion yen in loans to yakuza and corporate racketeers. When this eventually came to light in 1997, Miyazaki Kuniji, the former president of the Dai-Ichi Bank, ended up committing suicide.

The other unique store sign says "The Lover L'Amant". This is the title of an autobiographical novel by Marguerite Duras. It tells the story of when she, as a 15-year-old-girl, began having an affair with a 27-year-old man. Her mother is initially furious, until she learns that he's giving her money that can be used to pay off their debts.

### **"A MESSAGE RELAY RACE USING CHAIN EMAILS!"**

The last line of the chain email, "It's going to get serious", is a catchphrase that was often used on the 2004 TV show Medical Horror Check Show. Each episode was themed around some type of disease that had common symptoms (like fever or back pain), but would have terrible consequences if left untreated.

### **"AND EVEN AN ONLINE CHEERLEADING COMPETITION!"**

The text here is mimicking a thread on the Japanese message board 2-chan. The thread title is "Go for it! A thread for cheering on the red team. You can do it!" And then there are ten messages, all from anonymous posters:

1. This is a thread for cheering on the red team. Anyway, let's give them our support!
2. Do your best, red team! You're definitely gonna win! Hurray, hurray!
3. You're doing great, red team! There's no way you'll lose! Hurray! Hurray!
4. This year's red team is godlike. Just go with the flow. You're sure to win! Go get it!
5. The hell do you mean, "godlike"? The white team is way better. Suck it, red team.
6. The white team's here!!! Oh man, the white team defense force really sucks, lololol
7. Looks like you don't realize just how much better the white team is.
8. Comments 5 and 7 are from the same person. He's a white team lackey.
9. Forget that guy. More importantly, I'm hungry! What should I have for dinner?
10. Curry, obviously.

### **SAGE RECOMMENDED**

On any of the -chan boards (2-chan, 4-chan, etc.), if you enter "sage" into the email field when you make a post, it will create the post without actually bumping the thread. (Sage, written 下げ in Japanese, means "to lower".)

It's considered courteous to "sage" if you want to post, but you don't think many people will find it interesting. It's also a way to post in a thread that you don't like without giving the thread any extra attention.

## THE MONSTER OF THE KOSHIE

When it comes to high school baseball, “The Monster” is Daisuke Matsuzaka. In 1998, Matsuzaka gained national recognition after a stunning performance in the Summer Koshien: first he threw 250 pitches over 17 innings in a hard-fought victory over baseball powerhouse PL Gakuen. Then the next day, he threw a 15-pitch ninth inning to win the semifinals. And the day after that, he pitched an 11-strikeout no hitter to win his team the Koshien championship.

## THE LEFTY MONSTER

This is one of the nicknames for Takafumi Ogura. He’s a soccer player who played for several professional teams, including the Japan national team. Sports writer Tatsuhito Kaneko called Ogura “The Lefty Monster” because of his strong left-foot kicks, and the name stuck.

## THE RED DEVIL

Bob Horner is an American baseball player who started out playing for the Atlanta Braves in 1978. But in 1986, all the Major League clubs started colluding to drive down player salaries (which they were later sued for in 2004), so Horner left the Braves and became a free agent. He ended up getting signed on with the Yakult Swallows in Japan’s Central League, and in his first game with them, he hit a home run. Then the next day, he hit three more. For game three, his opponents gave up and walked him three times. Then in the fourth game, Horner got two more home runs. Six home runs in four games is a fearsome feat, and so the Japanese sports world started calling him “The Red Devil”.

## THE ORIENTAL WITCHES

Though the term “oriental” is no longer used to describe people, back in the 1960s, this was the nickname for the Japanese women’s volleyball team. It first came about when the team, which was an underdog team made up of former factory workers, won against the Soviet Union in the 1962 world championship. The Soviet press was so amazed that they called the team “The Oriental Witches”, and the rest of the world took the name up as well.

“Oriental Witches” might sound like an insult, but the Japanese press and the team itself adopted the title with pride. Masae Kasai, the team’s captain, spoke of it in an interview: “In Japan, a witch is a scary thing. But the nickname wasn’t meant to reflect this. It was a word to describe our volleyball play, which had never been seen before.”

The women would go on to represent Japan in the 1964 Summer Olympics, where they won the gold medal.

## YOUR STOMACH IS A COSMOS!

The 2000 Japanese TV drama Food Fight tells the story of Mitsuru Ihara, a handsome man who is secretly a food-eating champion. As he vanquishes his enemies in the gritty world of underground competitive eating, he often croons out his catchphrase, “My stomach is a cosmos.”

## HOT DOG TAKERU

This hot dog stand is named after Takeru Kobayashi, the Japanese competitive eater who took the food world by storm in the 2000s. His first appearance was at the Nathan’s Coney Island Hot Dog Eating Contest in 2001, where he ate 50 hot dogs in 12 minutes, almost double the previous record. It was so far beyond what anyone had done, that the



organizers ran out of signs to indicate how many hot dogs he'd eaten, and had to use handwritten signs instead. Takeru quickly became an international eating superstar, and as of this writing, holds 13 different world records related to food.

## "...GAME RESEARCH CLUBS THAT SPLIT WATERMELONS IN 16 STRIKES!"



As Nozomu says this, we see a guy in a baseball cap make a watermelon explode by tapping it. This is a parody of the 1984 movie *GAME KING! Takahashi Meijin vs. Mouri Meijin Collide! The Decisive Battle!* It's a mockumentary about a showdown between two real-life gaming celebrities (who both worked for the game company Hudson Soft). In the movie's opening sequence, we see a montage of the two "training" by doing ridiculous things. In real life, Takahashi Meijin's big claim to fame was that he could tap the buttons on a Famicom controller 16 times per second; so here in the movie, he taps a watermelon so quickly it explodes.

(Also worth noting, the bee on the man's hat in *Zetsubou-sensei* is very similar to the bee in the Hudson Soft logo.)

## TOKYO WATER

Nozomu is holding a bottle labeled "Tokyo Water" - and this is an actual, real-life thing. In 2007, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Waterworks started bottling and selling tap water for 100 yen per bottle. It was a publicity stunt to convince people that tap water in Tokyo is clean, safe, and just as good as any bottled water from a store.

## KISS

This group likely needs no introduction for American viewers, but just in case: KISS is an American rock band that formed in 1973. They wrote and performed dozens of world-famous songs, earning 40 Gold albums, 14 platinum albums, and even 3 multi-platinum albums. Aside from their music, the band's most noticeable feature is their makeup. Each member wears their own de-

sign, which represents a unique persona. From left to right, the band members shown are The Spaceman (Tommy Thayer), The Catman (Eric Singer), The Demon (Gene Simmons), and The Starchild (Paul Stanley).

## DON'T DRINK THAT

“Artsy kissing” is apparently just getting a second-hand kiss by drinking from someone else’s water bottle. However, this particular bottle has an orange label that says “Pico”, as in *Boku no Pico*, which you might remember from last episode’s liner notes.

## WATCH YOUR HEAD

Akiyuki Shinbo is the director of *Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei*, but he also directed several other popular shows like *Moon Phase*, *Pani Poni Dash!*, *Negima!*?, and *Hidamari Sketch*. And in each of those shows, he used an old gag from the comedy group The Drifters where a washtub falls from the sky and hits someone in the head. Be careful, Class 2-He, no one is safe...

## Ef

This is a reference to the PC visual novel *Ef: A Fairy Tale of the Two*, and its anime adaptations *Ef: A Tale of Memories* and *Ef: A Tale of Melodies*. Both of the anime series were produced by SHAFT, and directed by Akiyuki Shinbo.

## A BITTER DEFEAT



Kaere effortlessly kicks away all her would-be kissers, and they end up lodged in the floor with their legs sticking up in the air. This pose is a reference to the murder mystery story *The Inugami Clan*. One of the most striking scenes from the novel (and its movie version) is a pair of upside-down legs sticking out of a freezing lake, with the rest of the unfortunate corpse submerged under the water.



## "IN ANY EVENT, EVERYTHING IS SPLIT UP INTO SCIENTIFIC, ARTSY, AND SPORTY TYPES!"

As Nozomu says this, we're shown a large chart filled with tiny text. From left to right, the columns are labelled: Scientific, Artsy, and Sporty. Then, each row categorizes a different subject:

- **Newspapers - Nikkei (Scientific), Asahi (Artsy), Yomiuri (Sporty):** These are all national newspapers in Japan. The Nikkei is the world's largest financial newspaper, the Asahi was founded in 1879 and is one of the oldest newspapers in Japan, and the Yomiuri has the world's largest circulation with over 7 million readers.

- **National Team Managers - Osim (Scientific), Okada (Artsy), Troussier (Sporty):** These are coaches of Japan's National Soccer Team. Osim was head coach in 2006, and he brought in the idea that the team should stop mimicking other teams, and work to develop their own strengths. When Osim had a stroke in 2007, he was replaced by Takeshi Okada, who valued loyalty and selflessness above all. As for Phillip Troussier, he was the team's head coach in 1998, and led Japan to the final 16 in the 2002 FIFA World Cup, which at the time was Japan's best ever finish in the tournament.

- **Playoffs - Seibu (Scientific), Ni-Ham (Artsy), Softbank (Sporty):** These three baseball teams are all part of Japan's Pacific League. From 1999 through 2006, the Seibu Lions team was home to "The Monster", Daisuke Matsuzaka. Ni-Ham, short for the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham fighters, had moved to Sapporo in 2004, and was hard at work on a grassroots PR campaign to gain popularity among fans. And the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks team was (and still is) one of the most successful franchises in the league, having won the Japan Series championship 11 times.

- **Countries - India (Scientific), Russia (Artsy), America (Sporty):** Several Indian cities are hubs for world-class IT and engineering, including Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Mumbai. Russia has a long, rich history of arts and architecture, such as onion-domed churches and hand-painted icons. And America takes its sports very seriously - especially the Super Bowl. Super Bowl XLIX, held in 2015, was the most watched show in television history with over 114 million viewers.

- **Subways - the Hibiya Line (Scientific), the Marunouchi Line (Artsy), the Touzai Line (Sporty):** These are three different lines on the Tokyo Metro subway system. The Hibiya Line runs through Ueno, which is home to the National Museum of Nature and Science. The Marunouchi Line runs through Shinjuku and Ikebukuro, both big commercial and entertainment districts. And the Touzai line is a rapid transit line that cuts straight across Tokyo from East to West.

- **Gundam - Turn A (Scientific), Z Gundam (Artsy), G Gundam (Sporty):** These are, of course, three different series in the Gundam franchise. Turn A Gundam is a story set far in the future, where mankind has been split into two groups: people with incredibly advanced technology who live on the moon, and the people on Earth who lost their technology ages ago in a great war, but are starting to rediscover it again. Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam is an early Gundam series from 1985, which the director, Yoshiyuki Tomino, used as a canvas to fill with all his negative emotions that he felt toward the world at the time. And last, but certainly not least, Mobile Fighter G Gundam is a wild, over-the-top series where enormous mecha fight in a planet-wide martial arts tournament to decide which country gets to rule the Earth for the next four years.

• **The Alfee - Prince (Scientific), Sakazaki (Artsy), Sakurai (Sporty):** The Alfee is a popular Japanese folk rock band that's been around since 1974. "Prince" is the nickname for Toshihiko Takamizawa, the group's electric guitarist. He's well-known for the unique vibrato he employs while playing the guitar, using it almost like a synthesizer. Sakazaki Konosuke, the band's acoustic guitarist, is the storyteller of the group - as a child, he wanted to be a rakugo performer. And Masaru Sakurai, who plays the electric bass, is a huge fans of motor sports. So much so that he would go sit in the stands during sound checks and ask the PA staff to play recordings from F1 races.

• **Ways of Dying - Poison (Scientific), Hanging (Artsy), Seppuku (Sporty):** Just gonna let you use your imagination for this one.

• **Abe - Promising (Scientific), Not Promising (Artsy), Who the heck is that? (Sporty):** "Abe" is most likely "Koubou Abe", an author and playwright born in 1924. He helped establish science fiction in Japan during the postwar period, which might explain why "scientific" people supposedly enjoy his writing, "artsy" people supposedly don't, and "sporty" people have had no exposure to him at all.

• **Masami Nagasawa - Love her (Scientific), Love her (Artsy), Love Her (Sporty):** Masami Nagasawa is a Japanese actress who's been in dozens of films and won several awards. She's played sci-fi roles in films such as Pyrokinesis and Godzilla: Final Wars, she's played artsy roles in films such as Crying Out Love in the Center of the World and Tears for You, and she's even played action roles in films such Kingdom (for which she won the Nikkan Sports Film Award). So basically, all three groups agree: she's great!

## YO, OBORODZUKI

This is an awful pun. "Oborodzukiyo" ("A Spring Night with a Hazy Moon") is the name of a famous Japanese folk song. The "yo" (夜) in the song's title means "night". But the way it's written here, the "yo" (ヨ) is instead just an informal, emphatic particle.

**"...TOYOTA SUDDENLY MAKING THE SORT OF CAR THAT ONLY HONDA USED TO MAKE."**

The two cars in Nozomu's example are the Honda Stream (on the left), and the Toyota Wish (on the right). Visually, the two cars are extremely similar. Honda began manufacturing the Stream in 2000, while the Wish didn't appear until 2003, so it's pretty clear where Toyota got their inspiration from.

By the way, it's Mato standing next to the Toyota Wish, and she's wearing Behoimi's outfit from episode 10 of Pani Poni Dash!

**"MANGA THAT ONLY RAN IN SUNDAY SUDDENLY RUNNING IN MAGAZINE."**

This is a poke at Kouji Kumeta, the author of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. His previous manga, Katte ni Kaizou, ran in the comic anthology Weekly Shounen Sunday (published by Shogakukan). But when Zetsubou-sensei began, it did so in Weekly Shounen Magazine (published by Kodansha).



## HIDAMARIYU SUKECCHI

And this is a poke at Hidamari Sketch, another anime produced by SHAFT. Not-so-coincidentally, we can see Hidamari Sketch characters at the bottom of the screen (Hiro, Miyako, Yuno, and Sae), and they're standing in front of the bathhouse from Hidamari Sketch episode 10.

**"AIRING ANIME GEARED TOWARDS "DEEP VIEWERS" ON SUNDAY MORNINGS."**



Here we have a parody of Renton and the Nirvash type Zero from the 2005 anime Eureka Seven. It aired on Sunday mornings in Japan, an odd timeslot for a show aimed at a relatively older crowd.

## A STRIKING SILHOUETTE

After the Eureka Seven picture disappears, there's a quick flash of red with the black silhouette of a girl holding a cleaver. This is meant to be Rena Ryuuguu from the Higurashi series, another example of something that's "hard to classify". Though Rena looks like a cute brown-haired girl, and on the surface she's kind and naïve, she's also one of the story's most violent characters (and that's saying something).

**"IN THIS WAY, THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN MANY THINGS ARE NOW BEING BLURRED!"**

As Nozomu says this, a giant list appears on the screen behind him, filled with these items:

- **The Liberal Democratic Party / The Democratic Party of Japan:** at the time Zetsubou-sensei aired, these were the two biggest political parties in Japan.

- **Banks / Insurance Companies / Brokerage Firms**

- **Female TV announcers / Pop idols**

- **The Central League / The Pacific League:** these are Japan's two major baseball leagues, similar to the American League and the National League in the US.

- **K1 Rules / Pride Rules:** K1 and Pride are both international mixed martial arts promotions that got their start in Japan. The main focus for K1 was originally kickboxing, while Pride began with professional wrestling.

- **PSP / Portable DVD player:** The PSP, or "PlayStation Portable", was Sony's handheld gaming device that they released in 2004. Most portable gaming devices of the day used cartridges, but the PSP used a proprietary optical disc format called UMD ("Universal Media Disc"). UMDs had enough storage space to hold movies, and indeed, several movies were released that way for viewing on the system.

- **Fax machines with emailing capabilities / PCs with faxing capabilities**

- **Picture Dramas / Moving Manga:** Picture Dramas are usually short anime episodes with very little actual animation - camera pans and maybe some lip flaps are the most movement you'll see. On the flip side, "Moving Manga" is the technique of taking manga panels and using computer software to make the elements in the picture move.

- **Light Novels / Essay Manga:** Most US anime fans are probably familiar with light novels - they're books, generally aimed at young adults, which feature story content very similar to anime and manga. "Essay manga", meanwhile, are manga that usually feature story content similar to books. They're usually non-fiction stories, where the author writes and draws about their own life.

- **Comics with doujinshi in them / Doujinshi sold at bookstores**

- **Manga authors / Manga editors (Weekly Shounen Magazine only)**

- **Maid cafes / Sex parlors**

- **Dreams / Reality**

- **Nada Sousou / Miyuki:** Nada Sousou, sometimes called Tears for You, is a 2006 movie about budding romance between a stepbrother and stepsister. Miyuki is a 1980 manga by Mitsuru Adachi that deals with the same subject.

- **Hiroshi Fujiwara and Tomitoku Shuu's faces:** Hiroshi Fujiwara is the musician credited with popularizing hip hop in Japan. He's also an influential streetwear designer, and appeared in the 2003 film Lost in Translation with Bill Murray. Tomitoku Shuu, meanwhile, is a celebrity chef who ran several restaurants and appeared on various TV shows, including Iron Chef.

- **Rie Tomosaka's right / left:** Rie Tomosaka is an actress and pop star who was popular in the 90s and early 2000s. She was praised for her beauty, but as she aged, her jaw became crooked. This gave her face an asymmetrical appearance, which was difficult for her, since she already suffered from anorexia and body image problems. Nowadays, her crooked jaw has been mostly healed, apparently due to a type of bone-setting massage called "korugi".



## FANCY FOOTWORK

A soccer ball flies towards Harumi, but after a Matrix-style “bullet time” shot, she deftly slams it back outside. This is an homage to Shaolin Soccer, a 2001 sports comedy starring Stephen Chow.

Likewise, the image of Harumi running as a child - all zipping legs and a completely static upper body - is an homage to the anime 8 Man. In the show’s opening, the titular hero runs just like that, and ends up being faster than a moving train.

## WHAT’S HARUMI READING NOW?

The doujinshi in Harumi’s hands says “Shige/Shou”. This is referring to Shigeki Satou and Shou Kazamatsuri, two characters from Daisuke Higuchi’s popular soccer manga Whistle!

## MUDA, MUDA, MUDOU

There are two parts to this quick joke. The saying should technically be: “Muda, muda, muda!” (“Useless, useless, useless!”) Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure fans should recognize it - Dio Brando and his stand The World both shout this as a battle cry.

But here in Zetsubou-sensei, the last “muda” has been swapped out for “Mudou”. Based on the kanji, this is most likely a reference to Mudou Oda, a TV celebrity who also happened to be a Buddhist priest. However, he wasn’t exactly a saint; in 2002, he was arrested on charges of forgery and affiliation with the yakuza.

## CLENCH YOUR TEETH

When Comiket opens, Harumi needs to go fast! We see her teeth flash, and suddenly she’s moving at superhuman speed. This is a reference to Joe Shimamura, the main character of Cyborg 009. One of Joe’s cyborg abilities is Acceleration Mode, which he activates by biting down on a switch embedded in his teeth. Once he’s in Acceleration Mode, Joe can run at speeds up to Mach 5.

## ADULT CIRCUMSTANCES

If you remember from last episode, “grownup stuff happened” and they weren’t able to change the number of days relating to Kikuko Inoue’s birthday. It’s a little hard to say what the problem was this time, but perhaps it relates to the definition for a “scientific ending”. In the original Zetsubou-sensei manga, an ending was scientific if it was “about revenge” (shippe-gaeshi). But here in the anime, an ending is scientific if it’s “thought provoking” (kangae-ochi). Why the change? Who knows, guess grownup stuff happened.

## BUT WHY...

The phrase written here in Japanese is “Nande zo...” It’s a turn of phrase usually heard on the island of Shikoku; but for nerd culture at large, it’s associated with Nagai-sensei, one of Japan’s early Internet celebrities. As far back as 2002 he was gaining fame on 2-channel, and by 2006, he was “streaming” on a peer-to-peer platform called Peercast.

## **A FAMILIAR LIGHT**

The dome-shaped explosion, heading toward that exact configuration of skyscrapers, is a callback to the explosion in Akira which destroyed Tokyo and sparked World War III.

## **ZETSUBOU PHASE COMPLETE**

This is a reference to the first episode of Mobile Suit Gundam 00. The main character, Setsuna F. Seiei, shows up out of nowhere in a Gundam, thoroughly wrecks a military demonstration, and then calmly says, “First phase, complete,” before leaving as quickly as he came.

Here in Zetsubou-sensei, this is Nozomu letting us know that Part A is over.

## **WE MAKE MOX FUEL BY MIXING URANIUM WITH PLUTONIUM...**

This next part of the episode is all about “leftover items”. With that in mind, this bit of Lupin-style text is from a piece of the original manga story that couldn’t be included in the anime version. It’s this episode’s leftover item!

In the manga version, during Maria’s long list of example lucky bags, her last one is full of the leftover plutonium from an electric company. Nozomu balks at the danger, but an electric worker in a hardhat steps in and explains the fuel recycling program to Nozomu, using the text we’re shown here.

## **I ALWAYS CALLED HIM “LEFTOVER”**

This title is a parody of the first line in Natsume Souseki’s famous novel Kokoro. The original is: “I always called him ‘Sensei’.”

## **REAL DEALS**

One of Nami’s example bags is from a store called “Takashimaya”, and Nozomu is standing in front of a shop called “Boutique Rako”. These are both real-life shops in Japan. Takashimaya is a department store chain, and Boutique Rako is a small shop located in front of Shimoigusa Station near SHAFT headquarters.

## **KIDS RUN THROUGH THE CITY CORNER**

As Nami and Nozomu are discussing lucky bags, a group of children run by. Then, a couple shots later, Nozomu is sharing the screen with a big red balloon. This is an homage to The Red Balloon, a French movie from 1956 (which released in Japan that same year). It was the story of a boy who has a sentient red balloon that follows him wherever he goes, much to the delight of all the other children that he meets.



## LUCKY BAG CONTENTS SET A



One of the “prizes” in this lucky bag is a pillow shaped like a woman’s lap. You might (or might not) be surprised to know this is a real thing. It’s called the Hizamakura Lap Pillow, and just like you see here, it’s a pillow shaped like a woman’s waist and legs, complete with a skirt that you can look up to see panties.

**"YOU CAN'T FOOL ME!"**



As Nozomu says this, a man’s face looms on the left side of the screen. This is Bae Yong-joon, star of the Korean drama *Winter Sonata*. Bae Yong-joon’s character in the show wears tortoiseshell glasses, so naturally, when *Winter Sonata* became a huge hit, Yong-joon was also tapped to be a spokesperson for eyeglass companies.

## "IT'S GLASSES FRAMES THAT YOU'D NEVER ACTUALLY WEAR..."

There's a road sign in this shot, with a symbol on it that looks like a red heart. This is the symbol for the Japan Glasses Party, a fake political party that was created as a PR stunt for Eye Topia, an eyewear shop in Tokyo. The new "party" was introduced in 2006 via a series of parody press videos on YouTube featuring the two members of comedy duo OgiYahagi, both of whom wear glasses.

## TSURUPIKA

The mascot on this jar has huge eyebrows and a bald head with three vertical hairs. It's the main character from Tsurupika Hagemaru, a popular children's manga from 1985.

## MEAT BAG



The three unfortunate characters in this bag are all from Pani Poni Dash! From left to right, it's Lord Cat, Giant Salamander, and Mesousa.

## LUCKY

The next lucky bag is obscured - it's a blue bag, and the store's name ends in "te". It's most likely meant to be Animate, Japan's largest retailer of anime and video game merchandise. And the leftovers in the lucky bag are... The limited edition version of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei DVD 1, and a copy of the Zetsubou Song Collection. Ouch!

## IN YOUR EYES

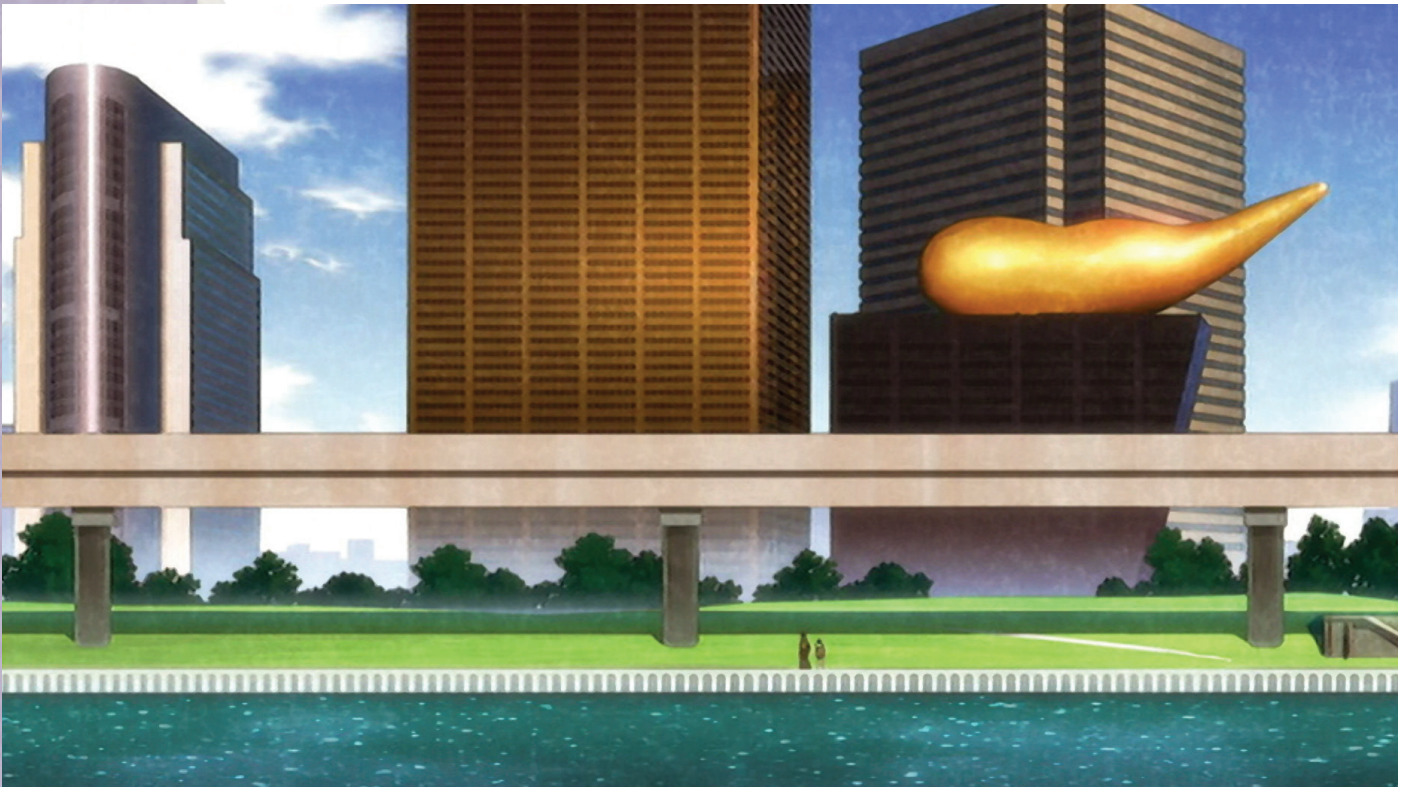
The kanji for "lucky" appears in the pupil of Kaere's eye. The slightly deeper joke here is that if you combine the kanji for eye (眼) and the kanji for lucky (福), you get ganpuku (眼福), which means "to see something beautiful" - or, in other words, "eye candy".

## FUJIWARA TOFU SHOP LUCKY BAG D

This is a play on Initial D, the street racing manga series by Shuichi Shigeno. The main character of Initial D, Takumi Fujiwara, works as a tofu delivery driver for his father at the Fujiwara Tofu Shop.



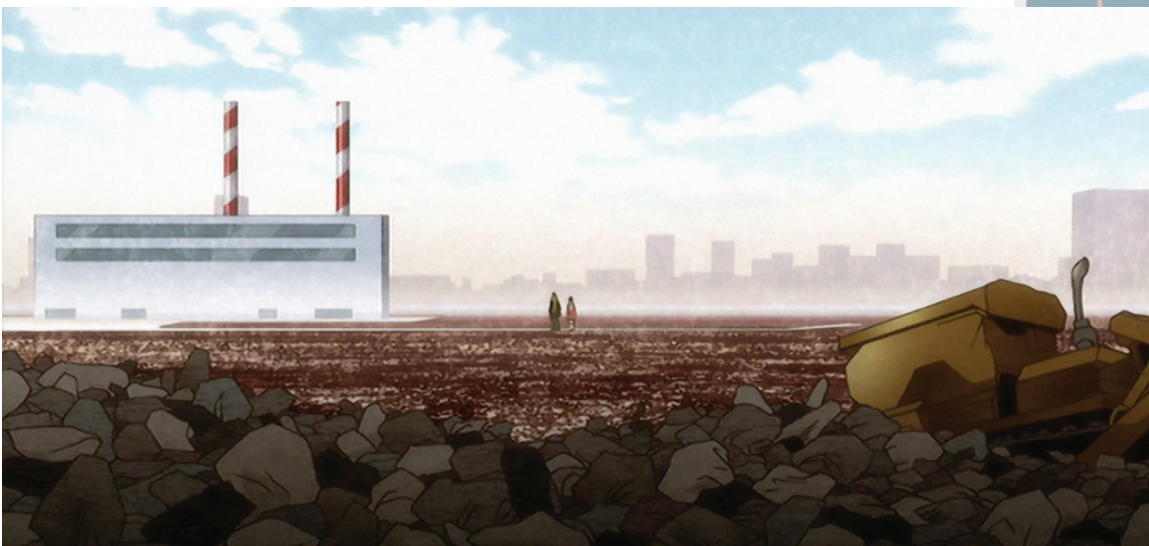
**"THIS IS A LUCKY BAG FROM A BEER BREWERY."**



As Kafuka says this, we're shown a real set of buildings in Tokyo. The big golden building in the middle is the Asahi Beer Hall, part of the headquarters for Asahi Breweries. Although you can't see it in this particular picture, the top of the tower has a white texture around the top, which makes the whole building look like a giant glass of beer.

To the right is a shorter black building with a golden structure on top. This is the Super Dry Hall, one of the most recognizable buildings in Tokyo. The gold structure is called "The Asahi Flame", and it's meant to represent "the burning heart of Asahi beer". However, thanks to its rather unfortunate shape, it's colloquially known as "The Golden Turd".

**"A LIGHT IS BEING SHINED ON THINGS THAT USED TO BE DISCARDED AS LEFTOVER WASTE..."**



We see Nozomu and Kafuka at a garbage dump, and there's some kind of heavy machinery half-buried in the foreground. This is based on a real image that was included in the Japanese government's 1981 White Paper on the Environment. In a section discussing the rise in both general and industrial waste, there was a picture of half-buried machinery at Yumenoshima, an artificial island near Tokyo that was built using waste landfill.

## **"SO THERE REALLY IS LUCK TO BE FOUND IN LEFTOVERS!"**

Right after Kafuka says this, a tiny list flashes up on the screen. Most of the items in the list are normal, real-world methods of recycling. But there are two manga jokes in there, as well...

"Castoff Magazine newcomer → Hit Sunday manga artist" is referring to artists who start off in Weekly Shounen Magazine, then swap over to Weekly Shounen Sunday and hit it big. One prominent example is Fujisaki Masato, who debuted in Magazine in 1998 with Luna Sea, then found success in Sunday in 2003 with Wild Life.

"Castoff Sunday manga artist → Jump hit manga artist" is being presented here as the next step up, career-wise. One manga author who took this path is Kouji Kiriya. In 1991, he published Sengoku Koshien in Weekly Shounen Sunday, but in 1993, he got the chance to publish Ninku in Weekly Shounen Jump. Ninku became so successful that it was made into a 55-episode anime series, plus an animated film.

## **"THIS IS LUCKY BAG FROM THE O-ASTER-IX BUFFALOES TEAM!"**

In 2004, the two worst-performing Pacific League baseball teams - the Orix Blue Wave and the Osaka Kintetsu Buffaloes - announced that they would be merging for the 2005 season. Not only did this mean that several players would be out of a job, but it also meant that there would be an imbalance between the Pacific League and the Central League. So, in an attempt to solve the problem, Internet companies Livedoor and Rakuten swooped in and decided to create a new Pacific League baseball team, the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles. It was created with surplus players from the Blue Wave and the Buffaloes who weren't invited to be on the merged team.

This is why Maria's lucky bag says "Blue Wave", and why all the helmets sticking out of it are helmets for the Eagles team.

## **"THIS IS PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC LUCKY BAG!"**

Though the logo on the bag is cut off, we can see just enough of it to know that it's based on the logo for the Tokyo Ueno Clinic, an actual clinic in Ueno that specializes in treating male genital disorders such as phimosis and erectile dysfunction.

## **MAZDA LOLITA ENGINE**

Most cars have a piston engine, but in the 1960s, Mazda developed a rotary engine to help distinguish itself from the competition. Rotary engines are smaller and lighter than piston engines, and since there are no reciprocating parts, they're also quieter.

The joke with this sign is that in katakana, the word "rotary" is spelled: ローターリー, but if you swap the characters around, you get "Lolita": ロリータ



## SAODAKE SHOP

This is a quick reference to a book called Saodake-ya wa Naze Tsuburenai no ka? (“Why Don’t Bamboo Pole Shops Go Out of Business?”) It was an economics book written by Shinya Yamada, the self-professed “Otaku Accountant”, and it did quite well - by April 2007, it was a million-seller.

## AYAYA

There’s an empty can of peaches next to (ex-)Tarou Sekiutsu’s box, with the word “Ayaya” written on it. This is a reference to Aya Matsuura, a pop singer with Hello! Project. Her nickname is Ayaya, and in 2002 she released a song called “Momoiro Kataomoi” (“My Peach-colored, One-sided Love”). The music video featured Ayaya and two peach-colored puppets working in a cartoonish peach canning factory.

## DRIP DRIP SPLASH

The sound effect of rain falling is written here as “shito shito picchan” (しとしとぴっちゃん). This isn’t a normal onomatopoeia - it’s very specifically how the rain is described in the opening song to the 1973 live-action TV series Lone Wolf and Cub.

## DO YOU LIKE ANYONE?

If you recall from an earlier liner note, Zetsubou-sensei’s Assistant Director Naoyuki Tatsuwa said in an Animage interview that “The girl I loved had a boyfriend.” This Lupin-style text is the question that prompted his answer.

## “AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?!”

Several times throughout this skit, Maria will pop up and ask, “And then what happened?!” She’s parodying a character from the 1969 anime series Hakushon Daimaou (“The Sneeze Demon”). In that show, during scene changes, a little mustachioed man with a red hat would pop in and say, “And then what happened?”

## FREE CELL PHONES

There are three pamphlets in the stand outside the cell phone store, labelled Mikaka, Au, and Son.

“Mikaka” is a play on NTT DoCoMo, the leading mobile phone service provider in Japan. If you type the letters N-T-T on a Japanese keyboard, but have it set to hiragana output, you’ll get みかか (“mi-ka-ka”) instead.

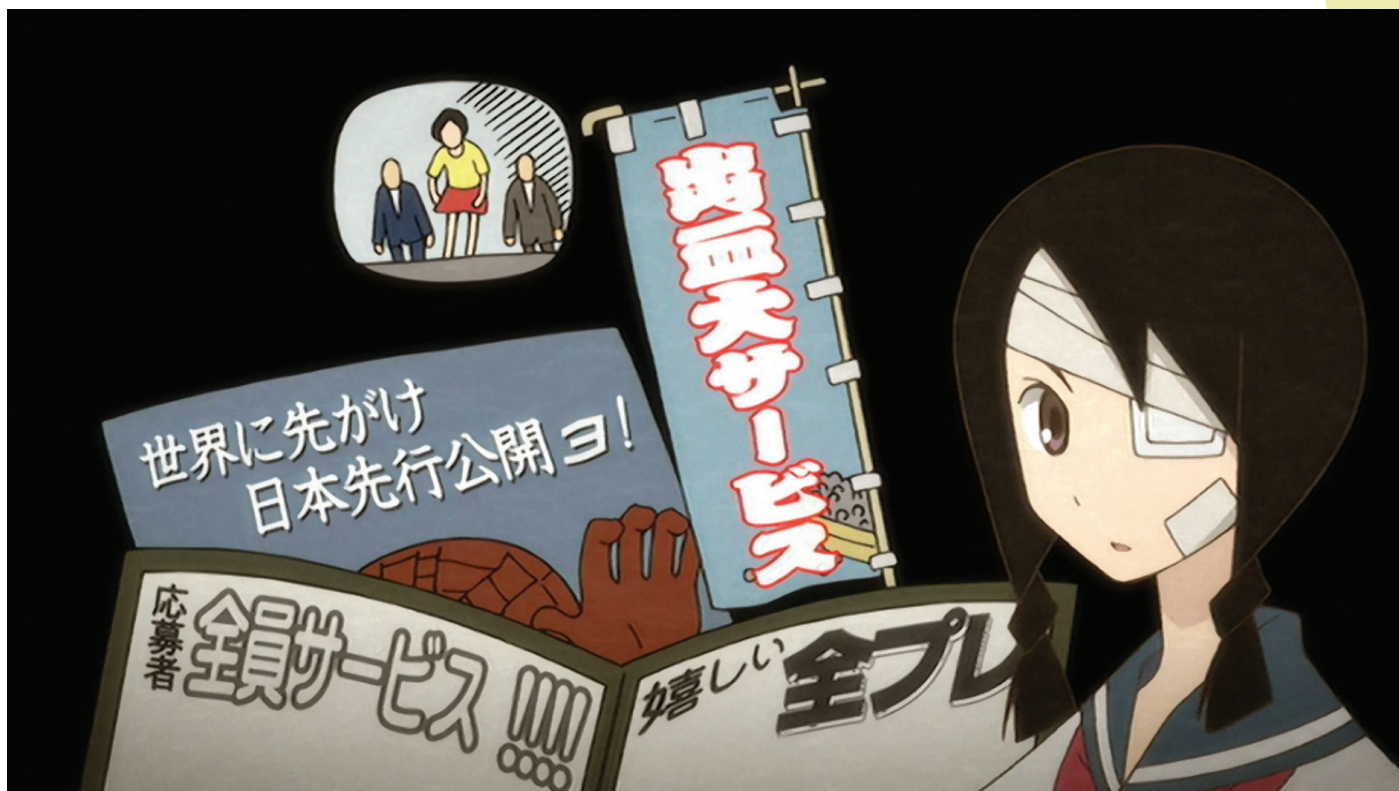
“Au” is another Japanese mobile phone company; their name is officially written using Roman letters, but on the pamphlet in Zetsubou-sensei, it’s written in katakana as “アウ”.

And last but not least, “Son” refers to Masayoshi Son, the president of multinational conglomerate Softbank. Though Softbank’s main focus is investment management, they do also provide services for internet and cell phones.

## SPECIAL PRICE TAKE IT, SAILOR

Whoever wrote this ad must be a Lucky Star fan... The opening song for that show is “Motteke! Seeraafuku” (“Take It! Sailor Uniform”). Whereas this phone banner says “Motteke! Suihei 0 en” (“Take it! Sailors pay 0 yen”)

## JAPAN GETS IT BEFORE THE REST OF THE WORLD!



The face on this poster is meant to be Spider-Man, and is specifically referring to the movie Spider-Man 3, which released in Japanese theaters on May 1st, 2007. The American release was on May 4th, but Sony released it three days earlier in Japan to take advantage of Golden Week, a huge week-long holiday there.

## WE'RE CUTTING OUR OWN THROATS!

Near the bottom of this banner, there's a picture of a tray of pachinko balls. If you're unfamiliar with the game, pachinko is a bit like slot machines, but instead of winning money, you earn a bunch of little balls that you can exchange at a counter for prizes. This banner is claiming that their pachinko parlor hands out so many prizes, they're losing money!

The catch is, the prizes aren't the real draw of a pachinko parlor. Although most gambling in Japan is illegal, pachinko slides under that rule because it's "entertainment", and the patrons aren't winning money directly. Instead, patrons take the prizes they win, and exchange them for money via someone who conveniently sets up shop near the parlor, and just happens to want to buy all the prizes. Legally, the shop claims it's not connected to the pachinko parlor. But the shop is totally connected to the pachinko parlor.

So even when pachinko parlors pretend that they're losing money on all the prizes they give away, it's just a ruse - they're going to get them all back shortly anyway.

## SHOUT, SHOUT, LET IT ALL OUT

One of Abiru's ad examples is a picture of three people on a TV screen - a woman in a skirt, with a man in a suit on each side of her. This is poking fun at a commercial for Apaman Network, a real estate company in Tokyo. In the commercial, actress Aya Ueto is dressed up like an Apaman employee, and she's shouting phrases like, "I'm going to do my best! I'm going to do my best for the customer! Until they find... they find... their ideal house!" On the one hand, that's a very nice sentiment. On the other hand, "I will help the customer buy a thing" is probably the bare minimum of what someone should expect from a business, so it's a little odd to have it shouted out into the sky like a lofty ideal.



## THIS EPISODE FIRST AIRED ON JUNE 16TH OF SHOWA 82.

This is an odd thing to say, partly because the year Showa 82 doesn't exist.

Though the Gregorian calendar is widely known and used in Japan, historically Japan has used a dating system based around the reign of emperors. The Showa era, specifically, covered the years 1926-1989, when Emperor Hirohito was in power. Thus, since Hirohito assumed the throne on December 25, 1926, the rest of that year was known as "Showa 1", the year 1927 was "Showa 2", and so forth.

Likewise, when Emperor Hirohito died on January 7, 1989, the Showa era ended. That means the last Showa year was Showa 64. The rest of 1989 was then known as "Heisei 1", to mark the start of Emperor Akihito's reign.

Doing the math, Showa 82 would equal out to the year 2007 - if Showa 82 existed, that is.

If you look, you'll see nonexistent Showa dates all throughout the show. Why is this strange system being used? That remains to be seen...

(However, even with the year corrected, that text line is still odd. Though it specifically says "aired" (housou), the first broadcast of this episode was actually on February 2, 2008. It was the print manga version of this story that first appeared in June of 2007.)

### "IS IT AN INCREASE OR A DECREASE?! MAKE UP YOUR MIND!"

Taxis charge more for their service during late-night hours, usually between 11PM and 5AM. At one time, it was a 30% increase over daytime prices. But in 2003, many taxis in the Tokyo area reduced their late-night service fees, so that it was only a 20% increase over daytime prices. So, yes - still an increase, but a decreased increase. Sorry, Chiri!

### "I'VE LOST ALL HOPE IN OUR FAVOR-FISHING SOCIETY!"

When Nozomu says this, a wall of text races up the screen. Here's what it says:

- **Trust us, we'll de-nuclearize:** North Korea has a shaky history with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the intergovernmental organization dedicated to inhibiting the use of nuclear weaponry. Back in 1985, North Korea ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but their declaration didn't match up with inspections. In other words, North Korea had undeclared plutonium. Eventually, in 1993, the IAEA called upon North Korea to square things up, but instead, North Korea announced that they were withdrawing from the NPT. Over the next two decades, North Korea kept promising to dismantle their nuclear program in exchange for favors, and then reneging on the promise and performing nuclear tests anyway. Finally, in 2012, all pretenses were dropped, and North Korea proclaimed that they would use the weapons as they saw fit.

- **America's "Iraq liberation" policy:** After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, they were driven back out by a coalition of 35 countries in the Gulf War. However, when the war ended, the president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, was not deposed. As the years passed and Hussein continued to violate international law, the US

government continued to search for a way to remove him. To that end, The Iraq Liberation Act was signed into law in 1998. Its stated purpose was “to establish a program to support a transition to democracy in Iraq.” But this was only one of many reasons that the US finally invaded Iraq in 2003, and overthrew Saddam Hussein and his government.

- **Magazine and Sunday’s “special prices”:** The prices for Weekly Shounen Magazine and Weekly Shounen Sunday are listed on the cover as the “special price” for the magazine... but really, it’s just the normal price.

- **Saying stuff like, “Be awed at the sight of my prowess!”:** This is Keigo Atobe’s signature line from Prince of Tennis. Keigo is good at tennis and he knows it, and this line is his way of literally commanding respect.

- **Doctors’ attitudes (Like, “Hey, I just healed you, buddy”)**

- **The attitudes of cell phone companies who say, “We’ll replace it for free this time”**

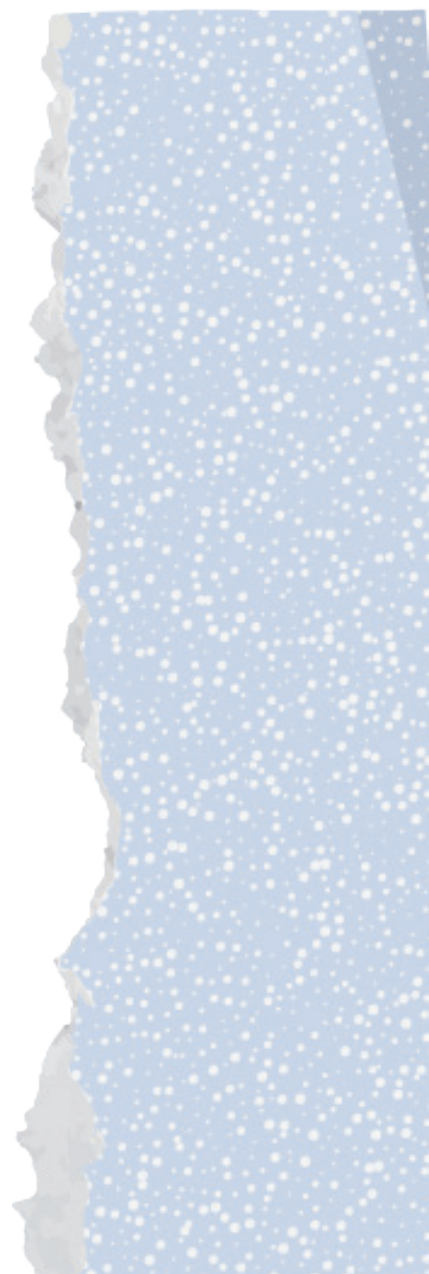
- **A host saying, “I let you dream for a while, so show some gratitude”:** Just to be clear, the meaning of “host” here is “someone who works at a Host Club”. Host Clubs are a type of establishment where female patrons pay male staff to drink and flirt with them. In this hypothetical scenario, it seems like either the woman has run out of money, or her time is up.

- **A Frenchman saying that Japan will get to drink Beaujolais first:** Beaujolais nouveau is a special type of wine grown in the Beaujolais region of France. According to standards set by the French government, Beaujolais wine can only be officially sold after 12AM on November 15th. That means, just by virtue of the fact that Japan is so close to the International Date Line, Japanese people will always be among the first to be able to legally drink Beaujolais - several hours before anyone in France.

- **We gave you the pandas, now fork over the cash:** Relations between China and Japan were strained after World War II. But in 1972, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei made an official visit to China, and diplomatic ties were reestablished. China gave two pandas to Japan, for the Ueno Zoo. Japan, meanwhile, started a program of Official Development Assistance to China, to help the country recover. It was a series of low-interest loans, grant aid, and technical assistance that lasted over forty years, to the tune of 3.66 trillion yen. To be fair, this was in exchange for China abandoning World War II reparation claims. But especially in recent years, as China’s GDP surpassed Japan’s, the average Japanese taxpayer started to question if the policy needed to continue.

- **A smoker who says he’s doing his part to boost tax revenue:** Tobacco prices in Japan are among the cheapest in the world; so even though the tax rate on tobacco is high, it doesn’t generate the type of revenue some might suspect. Add to that the extra costs incurred by smoking, such as healthcare expenses and property damage from accidental fires, and there maybe isn’t too much left to brag about.

- **An Italian car maker that says they’re “sharing” the cars with their customers:** This is most likely Ferrari, the Italian sports car manufacturer that got its start in Formula One racing. The founder,





Enzo Ferrari, had no intention of creating automobiles for sale to the general public. When he did eventually start to sell cars, it was only to help finance his racing endeavors.

- These list gags seem like favor-fishing. Sorry.

## **ONMYOU-JI**

Onmyouji, as it's written here, does mean "Grateful Life Temple". But the far more common way to spell it is 陰陽師, which means "sorcerer" or "exorcist".

## **TO MAKE A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR ALL, WE'RE CONDESCENDINGLY SWITCHING TO TERRESTRIAL DIGITAL BROADCASTS**

The swap from analog television broadcasts to digital officially began in 2008. However, some stations started broadcasting in digital as early as 2003, which led to confusion over duplicated channels. Then there was the issue of older TVs without digital receivers, which required special converter boxes in order to view digital content. But low-income households couldn't afford the rather pricey converters, prompting the government to set up a program to distribute them. All in all, it was something of a mess for consumers, without much tangible benefit for them.

## **WE LOST YOUR PENSION DATA, BUT WE'RE CONDE- SCENDINGLY CALLING THESE "RELIEF MEASURES"!**

The Social Insurance Agency, the government body in charge of pension records, computerized all their data in 1979, and then attempted to integrate all their various databases together in 1997. The years silently crept by until May 2007, when it was exposed that 50 million people who had paid their pension dues before 1997 were now missing from the system.

The fallout was enormous, and the government scrambled to send out notices to those affected. People whose data was lost needed to verify their pension and personal information, make additions or corrections, supply supporting documents, and so on. This was all presented to the public as "relief measures", as though the government was doing citizens a favor; but since it was the government's fault to begin with, "atonement measures" might have been preferable.

## **WE'RE TO BLAME, BUT WE'RE CONDESCENDINGLY SAYING WE'LL "OVERLOOK" WHAT THEY DID!**

According to the rules of the Japan High School Baseball Federation, high schools aren't allowed to waive tuition for prospective players. But in March of 2007, it came to light that the Seibu Lions, a pro baseball team, had secretly paid the tuition for a player named Katsuhito Shimizu, on the condition that he join the Lions when he graduated. Like a collapsing house of cards, it was suddenly discovered that over 350 schools had waived tuition for specific players, including top-ranked schools that often went to Koshien.

None of this was really surprising to the general public, who figured that paying for tuition like this was par for the course. (Especially since other high school sports are eligible for scholarships; baseball is the exception.) If anything, the sentiment seemed to be that it was the Federation's fault for not realizing that this would happen.

## **"I'LL MAKE YOU A VOICE ACTRESS" HE SAID, CONDESCENDINGLY...**

Sakumi Matsuda was the founder of Arts Vision, one of the industry's largest talent agencies. But in 2007, he was arrested for sexually assaulting a 16-year-old girl who was auditioning to become a voice actress. When questioned, he admitted to the crime, saying he did it "because she was cute." Though he was never prosecuted, the scandal did cause him to resign from the company.

## **"I CONDESCENDINGLY MADE HIM DRAW AN END TITLE CARD FOR ME. SORRY."**

The man speaking is meant to be Kouji Kumeta (though the one doing his voice is Nozomu's voice actor, Hiroshi Kamiya), and he's referring to the end card you're about to see at the end of this episode. It was drawn by Kenjiro Hata, the artist best known for creating Hayate the Combat Butler. Before Kenjiro started his own career, he was Kouji Kumeta's assistant.

## **YES, I'M GONNA SHINE IN YOUR LOVE**

The pachislot game Moeru Marin Batoru! features a fully-voiced song called "Love Love Submarine", and this is a line from that song.

If you're unfamiliar with pachislot games, they're basically slot machines that dispense pachinko balls instead of money. And just like pachinko machines, they come equipped with fancy LCD screens that pump out music and show animated stories as the player continues to play.

## **"IT'S A REMNANT OF THE BUDDHISM-SHINTO MIX FROM BEFORE THE MEIJI ERA."**

Kafuka is referencing a real historical event here. Shinto is considered Japan's indigenous religion, dating back to around 300 BC. But when Buddhism was introduced from China in the 6th century, Japanese people generally assumed that both were true, and began to mix the two together. Temples devoted to buddhas (beings who have attained enlightenment in Buddhism) were attached to Shinto shrines devoted to kami (the gods of Shinto), and the two were worshipped together.

However, when the Meiji government rose to power in Japan in the late 1800s, they wanted to remove all foreign influence, which included Buddhism. The Kami and Buddhas Separation Order was issued in 1868, and it led to the closing of temples, confiscation of land, and destruction of Buddhist items like books, statues, even temple bells. This was meant to reduce Buddhism's influence and wealth, and return power to Shinto, especially its devotion to the Emperor as a kami.

Yet the separation order was never fully able to remove the influence of Buddhism from Japan. This can still be seen today - 90% of funerals in Japan are Buddhist ceremonies. At most, what the order accomplished was creating the impression that Buddhism and Shinto are two different things.



## NOBEL PRIZE

The man on this poster is Koichi Tanaka, a Japanese electrical engineer who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2002. He, along with John Bennett Fenn and Kurt Wüthrich, were recognized for their work in the field of mass spectrometry.



## MELON BREAD HOW SAD

In 2006, a third grader wrote a song about melon bread, called “The Melon Bread Song”. These were the opening lyrics:

Anpan has sweet red beans in it  
But melon bread doesn't have any melon  
Curry bread has curry in it  
But melon bread doesn't have any melon  
Melon bread is my favorite  
But it doesn't have any melon. How sad!

The artist's name is Yuppi. Not only did she write this song herself, but she sang and played the guitar for it, too. A fan-made video for her song made it to YouTube, and the rest was history. It caught on like wildfire, and ended up with her getting a record deal out of it in 2007.

## IN CASE OF GODZILLA DISASTER RELIEF MISSION DANGEROUS WILDLIFE EXTINCTION

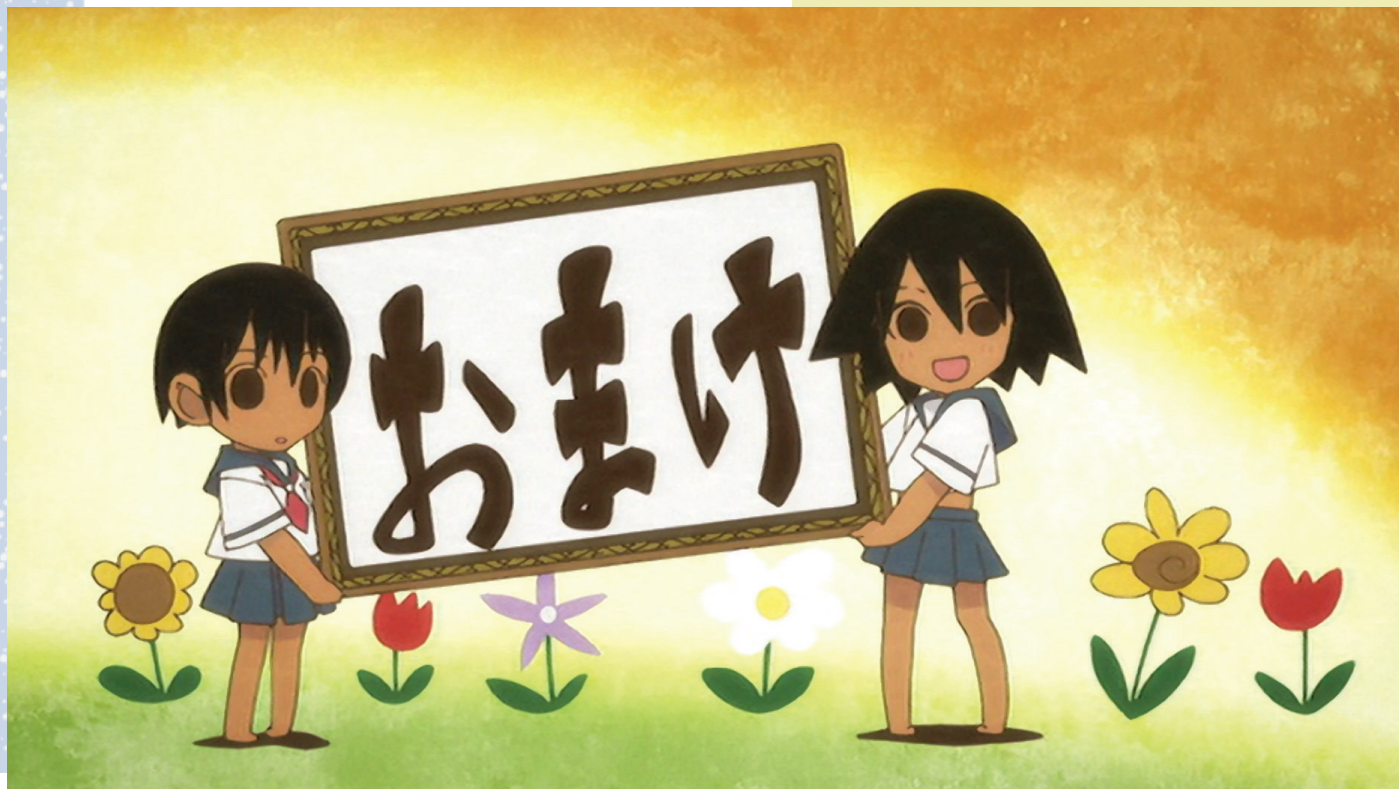
Whenever any wildlife starts to get overpopulated in Japan - especially animals that are dangerous to people or harmful to crops - it's fairly common for the local government to get involved. For example, they might offer a payout to hunters who kill boar or deer. This is generally known as Dangerous Wildlife Extermination.

However, if Godzilla ever shows up, the government response might need to be a bit... bigger. Yamane Ryuji of the Democratic Party of Japan thinks so, as well. In 2005, he told the General Affairs Committee of the House of Councilors that many UFOs had reportedly arrived on Earth, and that it could be a problem for Japan's defense. He raised the subject again in 2007, asking the government if it had ever confirmed the existence of UFOs. The answer was no, but that didn't stop UFOs from becoming a hot topic of conversation for quite a while.

### HIPPO TURTLE

The Japanese word for hippo is “kaba” (カバ), and the word for turtle is “kame” (カメ) (or “game” (ガメ) here, since it's being used as a compound word). But if you take these four katakana and reverse them, you get Mega Baka (メガバカ), which is the name of a one-shot manga from 2008. It became famous when it was named one of the finalists for the Dragon Cup, a contest where 10 manga artists compete to be published in Weekly Shounen Magazine. It became infamous when it was discovered that the artist had plagiarized from several different manga, including Death Note, Air Gear, and Tenjho Tenge.

### "NOW AN EXTRA!"



We're shown a quick little scene of Maria holding up a frame in a field of flowers. This is a spoof on the intro cards for Nadia's Omake Theater, which was a series of featurettes that used cutesy characters and gag humor to explain the universe of Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water.



## THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI IS FOUND IN TSUNDERE

This is a parody of a line from Yamamoto Tsunemoto's book of tales about his life as a samurai, Hagakure. The actual quote is: "The Way of the Samurai is found in death."

## RODRICO OF IZU

This next episode preview is a spoof on Yasunari Kawabata's novel "The Dancing Girl of Izu". In Japanese, the word "dancing girl" is odoriko, but for this preview, it's been changed to "Rodrico" (rodoriko).

In the original story, a 14-year old girl runs naked out of a bathhouse, waving. The narrator just laughs, taking it to be a sign of her youth. But in this parody version, when Rodrico runs naked out of a bathhouse, it doesn't sound like anyone's laughing.

# EPISODE 6

## TAIYO HIGH SCHOOL

Today, the high school is named "Taiyo High School". It's the name of the school in the 1973 live-action TV series Tobidase! Seishun ("Jump into Youth!"). In that show, it was the principal's policy to never turn anyone away, so the school ended up becoming a haven for troubled kids from all around the country.

## TIGREX IS SCARY

Tigrex is the flagship monster from 2007's Monster Hunter Freedom 2. It's a colorful red and blue wyvern with a head like a tyrannosaurus rex.

## IS 2G OUT YET?

And this is referring to Monster Hunter Freedom Unite, an expanded version of Monster Hunter Freedom 2 that released in Japan on March 27th, 2008. (The Japanese title of Monster Hunter Freedom Unite was Monster Hunter Portable 2nd G.) This episode first aired on February 9th, 2008, so they had less than two months to go!

## BECAUSE EINSTEIN ORIGINALLY VIEWED THE UNIVERSE AS STATIC...

This big chunk of Lupin-style text is a (very) quick introduction to the Big Bang theory. Not the 2007 American TV series, but the actual theory on the expansion of the universe, first proposed in 1927 by Father Georges Lemaître, a priest and theoretical physicist at the Catholic University of Louvain. Many cosmologists of the time, including Albert Einstein, refused to accept the idea that the universe was expanding. But as technology improved, observational evidence continued to

favor Lemaître's theory; and when cosmic microwave background radiation was discovered in 1965, the Big Bang became the preeminent theory of the origin of the universe.

## ***I BEG YOU, DO NOT KNOW***

This title is a twist on a tanka from poet Akiko Yosano. The real title is "I Beg You Brother, Do Not Die", and it's about a sister who fears that her younger brother might die in war.

## ***PUTTSUN PURIN***

There is a brand of pudding in Japan called "Pucchin Purin". It's a little different from what most Americans might think of as pudding; it's closer to a caramel custard or a flan. In each single-serving container, there's a layer of caramel sauce on the bottom that's intended to be on the top when you eat it. So first you turn the container upside down over a plate, and pop a little plastic release lever on the bottom, which lets the pudding slide out without breaking. That clicking sound is the "pucchin" in Pucchin Purin.

However, here it says "Puttsun Purin", and puttsun means "to go crazy" or "to lose one's temper".

## ***OSHIO WAS 30 YEARS OLD***

Going by the kanji (and the age), she's most likely referring to Manabu Oshio, a former singer and actor. And if that's the case, she dodged a bullet. In 2009, Oshio was arrested on charges of drug possession and neglecting to care for a hostess he was with, who also used his drugs and died as a result. He ended up serving four years in prison.

## ***IT'S ACTUALLY A REALLY SCARY BUG BITE (YOU'LL PROBABLY DIE)***

This is another reference to Medical Horror Check Show, the TV series mentioned in a previous liner note. Potentially lethal bug bites are right up that show's alley.

## ***ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES***

Cell phones send and receive signals using RF waves, a form of energy in the electromagnetic spectrum. Though there has been no scientific proof of any adverse health effects from exposure to RF waves, in the early days of cell phones, there was a lot of public concern that excessive cell phone use might cause brain cancer, or other such maladies.

## ***"PLEASE LEAVE ME IN THE DARK!"***

As Nozomu cries out for ignorance, a huge list starts scrolling up behind him. Here are the examples listed:

- **Miss World's plastic surgeries:** In 2005, Maria Julia Mantilla Garcia from Peru was crowned Miss World. During interviews, she did admit that Cesar Morillas, a Peruvian plastic surgeon, gave her a nose job and breast augmentation. But when Cesar said in his own interviews that he also removed fat, operated on several other parts of her face, and gave her buttock implants, Maria was incensed. She denied it all, and threatened to sue.



• **What happens after the end of Densha Otoko:** Densha Otoko (Train Man in English) is a supposedly true story that first came about through posts on 2-channel. One poster, a self-professed shy otaku, intervened when a drunk man was harassing women on the train. Then, to his surprise, one of the women sent him a thank-you gift. This led to him posting on 2-channel for help and advice, and the community came together to cheer him on in his romantic pursuit.

This series of posts was eventually collected into a novel, which was so popular that it was also made into manga, a TV drama, and even a live-action movie. However, the story never goes beyond what happened after the otaku and his love interest started dating. Did it go well? Did they break up? In the real 2-channel discussion thread, there are several posts (and lewd ASCII art) from posters who are skeptical that the otaku will be able to hold a relationship. These were obviously edited out of the book, and never made it into any other version.

• **The “Ippai no Kakesoba” author’s grift:** Ippai no Kakesoba is a novel by Ryouhei Kuri, about a poor mother and child who come to a soba restaurant every New Year’s begging for food. She only asks for one serving for the two of them to split, but the shopkeeper secretly makes enough for them both. The novel, which the author claimed was a true story, was originally beloved and even made into a movie, but eventually the story was shown to be false. What’s more, it came to light that the author had been committing acts of petty fraud for years.

• **The story that “Nobody Knows” is based on:** Nobody Knows was a successful movie that debuted at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival. It told the story of a group of four siblings who all had different fathers, and once their mother found a new boyfriend, she neglected them to the point of total abandonment. However, as sad as the movie was, the real event it was based on was even more tragic: in 1987, a mother gave her 14-year-old son \$350, told him to watch his three younger siblings, and left. When city officials finally discovered the children nine months later, they were living in filth and incredibly malnourished, and one of the 14-year-old’s friends had killed the youngest child.

• **Where horses with broken legs go:** When a horse breaks a leg, the horse is almost always euthanized. Unlike humans, horses have light leg bones, and when they break, they tend to shatter. Because of this, repairing the bone is often impossible.

• **The family register of a parent and child who don’t look alike:** Sometimes it’s best not to ask the question unless you’re ready to hear the answer.

• **A net idol’s real age:** It’s assumed that most internet celebrities are fudging their age.

• **How much it costs to make cola:** Whatever the price you pay for a bottle of Coca Cola, you can be sure that the cost to make it is significantly cheaper. Though bottling and shipping and retailer cuts can add a fair bit, the ingredients in soda are all very inexpensive.

• **How to make a bomb:** Both sharing the details and applying the details are a crime.

• **What’s under the floors of defective housing:** If something is wrong with your house’s floors, you are likely in danger, and it will likely be expensive to fix.

• **Your girl’s religion:** Modern-day Japan has more than its fair share of cults. Beyond just the headline-makers like Aum Shinrikyo, Pana-Wave Laboratory, Happy Science, and Soka Gakkai, it’s estimated that there are around 2,000 cults currently operating in Japan.

• **Who’s inside the mouse and the duck:** When you go to Disneyland, that’s not actually Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck walking around.



• **A Coun\*ach's real top speed:** This is meant to be "Countach", a model of car made by Lamborghini. Its top speed was advertised as being 187 miles per hour, but even the 25th Anniversary Edition model only made it to a top speed of 183 mph.

• **The '86 you bought is really an '85:** In the racing manga Initial D, the main character Takumi Fujiwara drives a Toyota AE86. Takumi's best friend Itsuki wants to buy a car just like it - but the one he ends up buying turns out to be a Toyota AE85 instead.

• **The results of reader polls:** Asking for the public's opinion is always a risky proposition. The Japanese network Fuji TV has a program called Weekly Fuji TV Critique, where people can write in and express their thoughts about the network. Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei spoofed this with a handful of short skits called "Weekly Zetsubou-sensei Critique", where Kudou and Chiri read viewer feedback, all of which was negative.

• **How many copies that one manga has sold:** If you recall from previous liner notes, Kenjiro Hata used to be Kouji Kumeta's assistant. Kenjiro then went on to create Hayate the Combat Butler, which as of June 2022, has over 20 million copies in circulation.

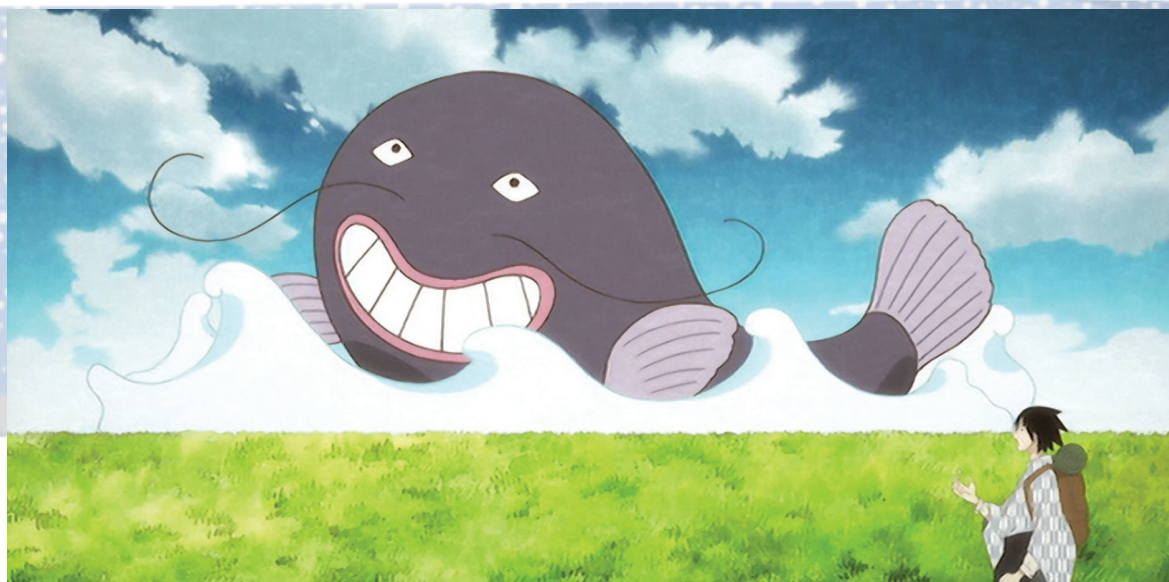
**"LIKE WHEN YOU RENT THE NEXT VOLUME OF 25..."**

This is a reference to the American crime drama 24. It premiered in 2001, and ran for nine seasons.

**HEROES IS GREAT! LET'S ALL WATCH IT**

And this is a reference to Heroes, another popular American TV show that began airing in 2006.

**RAMPAGING CATFISH**



In Japan, there's a widely-held belief that catfish are connected with earthquakes. The idea has its roots in mythology, specifically the story of Oonamazu, a giant catfish which was said to live underground and shake the earth. But the connection has real-world origins, too. On November 11th, 1885, an eel fishermen reported catfish acting odd, which he took to be a sign of an impending earthquake. Then, when the great Edo earthquake struck that night, his story was reported far and wide. From that point on, catfish and earthquakes were indelibly linked in Japanese culture. Cartoon catfish are used as logos on Earthquake Early Warning devices, and catfish are connected to earthquakes in several anime and manga. For example, in the SNES game The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past, a giant catfish gives Link the Quake Medallion.



## STANDING RACCOONS

This isn't actually a raccoon, it's a red panda. In 2005, Futa-kun the red panda became a national sensation when zookeepers at the Chiba zoo took a photograph of him standing on his two hind legs. The zookeepers were happy about his popularity, if a little confused, since it's not rare for a red panda to be able to stand on its hind legs. All red pandas can do it; they use it as a defense mechanism in the wild.

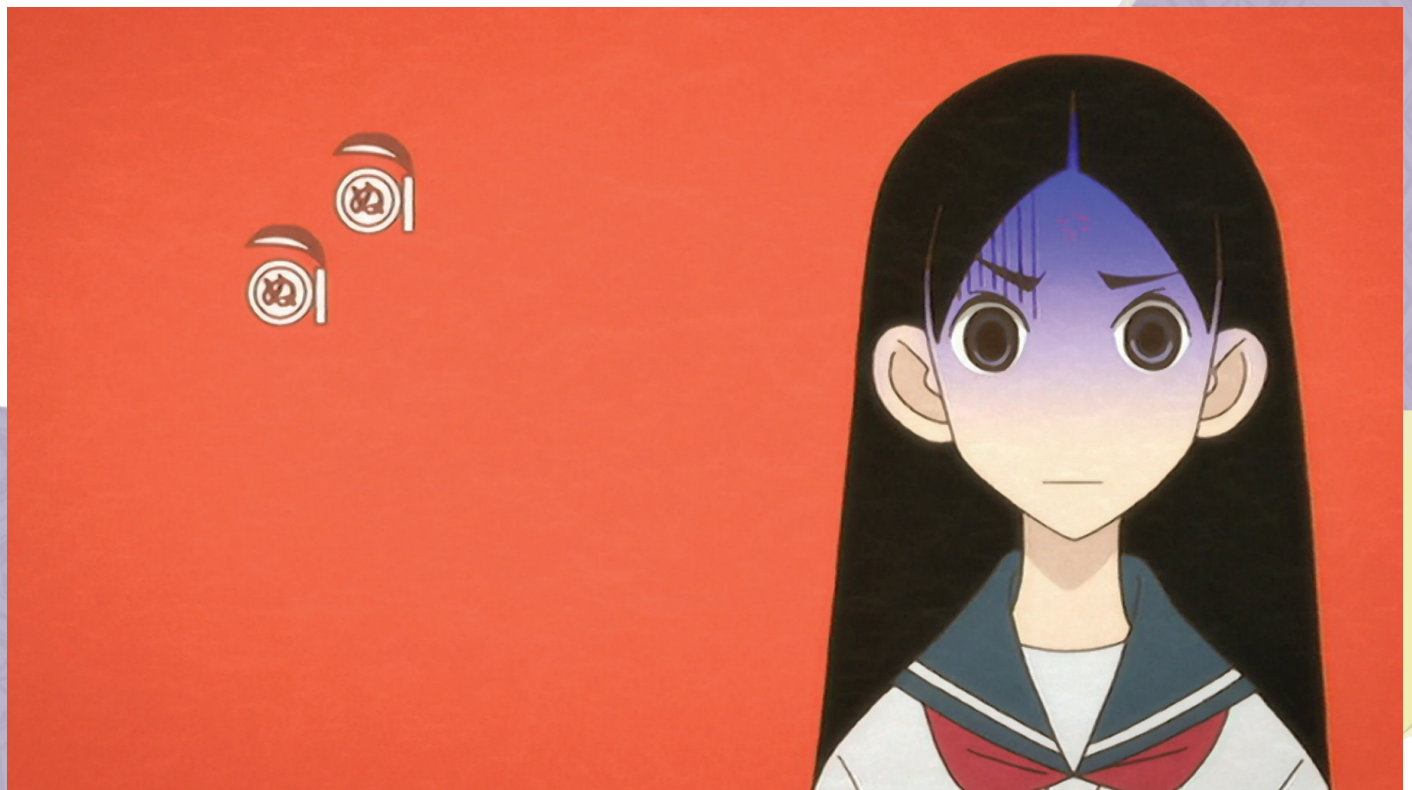
## "TH-THIS IS... A CROP CIRCLE?!"

When the camera changes to a letterboxed view as Nozomu steps out of the tall grass, it's a parody of a scene from the 2002 M. Night Shyamalan movie *Signs*. In that movie, Graham Hess (played by Mel Gibson) steps into a clearing in a cornfield, only to discover that it's part of a crop circle.

## TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

The scene cuts back to the school, and for just a moment, we can see by the gate that the school's name has changed to Kawahama Municipal High School. This was the name of the school in *School Wars*, a 1984 live-action drama about an underdog high school rugby team.

## "HONESTLY! THE CLOSING CEREMONY IS ALREADY OVER..."



As Chiri complains, we see two little identical drawings near her. This is a stylized version of the logo for a Japanese textile company called Kamawanu. "Kama" means "sickle", "wa" means "circle", and *nu* is the hiragana letter "nu" - so for their logo, Kamawanu places these three things beside each other, like a picture puzzle to figure out.



**"BEHOLD. THIS IS THE UNDERLYING TRUTH OF THE UNIVERSE!"**



Oh, boy. This is really big, with a lot of parts, so let's take it one piece at a time.

- In the upper left, there's a blue planet attacking a brown planet. The blue planet is "Hekiru", and the brown one is "Korin". Hekiru represents voice actress and singer Hekiru Shiina, and Korin is a planet that pin-up model Yuko Ogura actually claims to have come from. (It's apparently an in-joke from when she was in middle school.)

- There's a woman standing on Planet Korin, punching a box that says "Hit Parade". The Night of Hit Parade was a variety show from 1995, and Yuko Ogura appeared on it as a guest. But that was before she adopted her current "cutesy" stage persona, so her voice and mannerisms were entirely different. Apparently she'd prefer it if that footage didn't exist

- The pink building underneath Planet Korin is marked as the Ueno Clinic. If you recall from a previous liner note, the Tokyo Ueno Clinic specializes in male genital disorders.

- Wind is blowing from Planet Korin, and lifting the skirt of a girl nearby. Is that Kaere, perhaps?

- Blue figures are running towards the flashing panties. They have "love" and "masturbation" written on their chests, with the word "union" floating nearby.

- Near these figures is a river, labelled "Sex Crimes".

- Above the blue figures, a jagged building floats in the sky. It's "Cherry and the Secret Factory", a play on Roald Dahl's famous children's book Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. However, given the ties between "cherry" and virginity, and the panties spectacle happening right outside, this factory is probably adults-only.



• The factory is pumping out Whitebands, plastic wristbands associated with the Whiteband Project. It was an initiative to end global poverty (in the US, it was known as Make Poverty History). The idea was that people would purchase the wristbands to show their solidarity, and the funds would go to help the poor. But in practice, what happened to the funds wasn't so clear.

• Underneath the waves of Whitebands, there's a green box shooting out radio signals marked as "idol voice actresses", and the green box itself is labelled "TV Saitama". Television Saitama is an independent TV station that airs a lot of anime (including Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei). And "idol voice actresses" refers to chapter 97 of the Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei manga, where Chiri is berating Nozomu for using the term "idol voice actress CD". She says he has to choose one term or the other - but the joke is, the woman who plays Chiri, Marina Inoue, is both an idol and a voice actress.

• Beneath the blue figures, there's a big spiky word balloon that says "A virgin's dream", and then a little yellow head is adding the word "Shokotan". Shokotan is the nickname for Shoko Nakagawa, a Japanese celebrity whose career has close ties to anime and tokusatsu shows. She's best known for being the presenter of a variety show called Pokémon☆Sunday, and given the show's younger age demographic, there were likely many virgins watching.

• To the right of that brown spiky word balloon, there's a giant wall with an arched gate. The wall is labelled as the "Annual Income Wall".

• There's a man in sunglasses playing the guitar on the other side of that wall, and he's saying "Hamasho". If you remember from episode 1, this is a nickname for famous singer/songwriter Hamada Shougo.

• There's also a man outside the Annual Income Wall, guarding the gate with his arms crossed, and saying the word "Shogun". This is a caricature of Kim Jong Il, the former supreme leader of North Korea. "Shogun" was his nickname, and since the Korean people faced such incredible hardship under his tenure, he's depicted here as an impediment to wealth.

• To Kim Jong Il's left is the word "restructuring". In Japanese, this is a polite way of saying "getting fired".

• A little further left, we see people kneeling on the ground, near a sickly looking red stream. The red stream is labelled "personal bankruptcy".

• Looking further to the right, near the middle of the picture, there's a tall tower with a red roof, and a grey person sitting on top. That tower is marked as "Hello Work", which is the name of the Japanese Government Employment Service Center - in other words, it's where unemployed people go. Thus the throngs of people clamoring around the base of the tower.

• The grey person, meanwhile, is labelled "amakudari". This is the Japanese term for a high-ranking government official who retires, and promptly takes on a high-ranking business job. This brings with it risks of collusion, makes their retirement pension seem like a waste of money, and ensures that they'll never have to struggle with the masses down below.

• Behind the tower, there's a hole in the Annual Income Wall, with black cables coming out of it. These are marked ADSL. You might be familiar with DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), a fairly common type of Internet technology that delivers data through existing phone lines. ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) is a subset of DSL that allows for separate upload and download speeds, which is good for residential users who generally need more download speed than they do upload speed. At the time Zetsubou-sensei aired, it was the fastest Internet option for the average home user in Japan.

• However, further down the ADSL pipeline, there's another wall, marked ISDN. This stands for Integrated Services Digital Network, and as far as Internet service goes, it was a step up from dial-up over copper telephone wires, but it couldn't match the speeds of ADSL.

• Finally, the ISDN line unravels into Nichrome wire. You won't get much Internet service over that, but at least it can be used as coiling in space heaters to keep warm.

• Oddly, one of the ADSL wires is snaking off to the right, and forming into a dark-haired woman named Cocco. What's more, this is labelled as being her "former" version. Cocco is a singer/songwriter who got her start in 1997, then "retired" in 2001. (Don't worry, this isn't the last you'll see of her.)

• Moving back to the left, in front of the kneeling people, there are large kanji scrawled into the ground that mark this place as "Land of Despair".

• To the left of that is an orange building with purple and brown figures splayed on the ground around it in a circle. This orange building has "Genocide Comiket" written on it, referring to Summer Comiket in August of 1992. The temperatures were so high that year, and the crowds so dense, that heatstroke ran rampant. Many people passed out, and the first-aid room looked more like a field hospital.

• To the right and slightly down from Genocide Comiket, there's a large wall near the cliff edge. It says "Murakami Fund", in reference to a mutual fund started by shareholder activist Yoshiaki Murakami. Murakami's modus operandi was basically to find struggling business, craft ways to profit from the situation, and then leave before the company collapsed. Perhaps not surprisingly, he was indicted for insider trading in 2007.

• Next to that wall, there's a blue man with "loser" written across his chest, and he and others are clinging precariously to a cliff labelled "Two Million Annual Income Wall". A country's poverty rate is the ratio of its people who live on one half or less of the median household income, and in 2007, Japan's median income was 4 million yen (approximately \$40,000). So this cliff, at 2 million yen, represents poverty.

• There's a purple doll gazing at the cliff from the far side of the wall, with "Simon Yotsuya" written next to it. Simon Yotsuya is an artist who specializes in life-sized dolls. At first he would make dolls that were complete, but as his style advanced, his pieces would have human faces and hair, but half-finished bodies revealing the wooden frames and ball joints beneath the skin.

• The green river to the right of the purple doll is labelled "The Generational Gap", and there are two little green people on either side of the river, one named "Seiko", and the other "Sayaka". This refers to singer/actress Seiko Matsu, and her singer/actress daughter Sayaka Kanda. In the 2000s, Sayaka had a string of boyfriends that Seiko did not approve of, and their fights caught the media's attention.

• Beneath Sayaka, there's a banner that says "Sazaebon", which was a character created as a mashup of the friendly housewife from Sazae-san and the comically dumb father from Bakabon. Sazaebon's ridiculous face was plastered on keychains, t-shirts, pencils and more, and it was a hot seller. The only problem was, Sazaebon's creator never got permission from the people who made Sazae-san and Bakabon. Both were furious.

• On the bottom left, we can see the "Sex Crimes" river running down and pooling up on a small platform. The purple box designates this place as "The Fountain of Knowledge".





- Floating in the pool, there's a yellow book marked as "Penguin Club". Not to be confused with Disney's online game Club Penguin, Penguin Club is an adult manga anthology magazine that's been running since 1986.

- Fittingly, the water running off the platform and into the void is labelled "libido".

- In the center-bottom of the whole picture, there's a man sitting in a comfy-looking chair. He's flanked on either side by boxes that say "Chairman Okuda" and "hybrid", and on the floor, there's a book that says "Jump". This is Hiroshi Okuda, the chairman of the Toyota Motor Corporation from 1999-2006. He was the man in charge when Toyota released the Prius, the world's first mass-produced gasoline-electric hybrid car. As for the Shounen Jump magazine on the floor... maybe he just needs something to do now that he's retired?

- To the right of Chairman Okuda, there's what looks like a giant gold coin on the side of the cliff. This is actually a tsukubai, a basin used for ritual washing at temples. In fact, this is based on the tsukubai at Ryouan Temple in Kyoto, with the kanji all around it meaning: "I only know that which I need to know".

- A little down and to the right of the tsukubai, there's a blue die. We can only see three of its faces, but the kanji on them are 自, 民, and 党. Put them together and you get 自民党 ("jimintou"), an abbreviation for the Liberal Democratic Party.

- Above the tsukubai, there's a pink puddle labelled "One-Child Policy". This was an initiative implemented in China starting in 1980. Citing overpopulation concerns, the Chinese government passed a law that families could only have one child. However, this led to significant human rights abuses. Women who were pregnant with their second child when the law was passed were rounded up by officials and had their babies forcibly aborted. Parents who already had a child were sterilized. And since sons are preferable to daughters in Chinese society, under the One-Child Policy, mothers would more frequently abort their children if they were girls, so that their one child could be a boy. This has led to a gender gap that is still widening today, even though the One-Child Policy was finally lifted in 2021. According to journalist Mei Fong, the Policy was lifted "because [China has] too many men, too many old people, and too few young people. They have this huge crushing demographic crisis as a result of the One-Child Policy. And if people don't start having more children, they're going to have a vastly diminished workforce to support a huge aging population."

- On the bottom right, there's a huge mass of people walking along a red path, which leads up to a shadowy hole. The yellow box next to the huge mass of people says "anti-Japanese education", the red path is marked "illegal immigration", and the shadowy hole is labelled as "The Dark Society". The idea is this: due to the events of World War II, Japan has a spotty relationship with its neighboring countries, especially China and South Korea. According to BBC World Service polls, almost 80% of people in those countries view Japan negatively (thus the "anti-Japanese education" label). Yet, people from China and South Korea also make up the bulk of illegal immigrants into the country (thus "illegal immigration"). This has led to an underlying fear in Japanese society that "people raised to hate Japan will have no problem committing crimes once they're here." (Thus "The Dark Society"). However, according to statistics from the Justice Ministry, the actual percentage of immigrants in Japan who commit crime is quite small (0.4%).

- To the left of the One-Child Policy puddle, there's a yellow figure sticking out of a hole. It has "Oshira-sama" written on its chest, which is the name of a house god revered in the Tohoku region of Japan. They're said to protect people's homes, cure women's diseases, and watch over children.

• Moving up to the top right of the picture, there's a sun up in the sky, but it's labelled "Artificial Sun". This is referring to China's Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak, an experimental fusion energy reactor in Hefei. Testing with it began in 2006, and it got the nickname "artificial sun" since it simulates the fusion process that happens in stars.

• The grey tower below the sun is labelled "Roppongi Hills". Roppongi Hills is a development project that opened in Tokyo's Roppongi district in 2003. It has restaurants, cafes, an art museum, and more, and at the center of it all is the 54-story Mori Tower. Some of the space in the tower is used for offices, but there are expensive residential apartments in there as well. Those who are rich and famous enough to live in Roppongi Hills are called the "Hills Tribe".

• Beneath the tower, next to a man at a desk, it says "Designed by Aneha". Hidetsugu Aneha was the architect who falsified his earthquake safety data, mentioned in a previous liner note.

• And to the left of the man at his desk, there's a big white word bubble that says "Yutori Education". Introduced in the late 1980s, the Yutori Education Policy was meant to be a gentler approach to learning, so there would be less focus on rote memorization, and more freedom for independent learning. Of course, this wasn't without its drawbacks. A more relaxed curriculum turned into lower national scores in literacy and math.

• There's a gaping chasm to the right of the tower, and a blue puddle pointing down it says "female announcers". Female television announcers in Japan are treated like models or idols, and there are even popularity contests to choose the year's most popular one.

• Off to the left, there's a bunch of giant eyes leering at a girl. The girl is marked as a "net idol", and all the wandering eyeballs are marked as "strangers' eyes".

• The road heading southeast from all the eyes is labelled as "Maiden's Road", which is an area in Ikebukuro that has a high concentration of shops devoted to female yaoi fans.

• There's a giant hole near the road, which is labeled as "Toranoana". Toranoana is a store that specializes in anime and manga items. "Tora no ana" means "tiger's den" in Japanese, but the word for den (穴) can also mean "hole".

• Across the street from Toranoana, there are two other buildings: "KBooks" and "Real CP". "K-Books" is a second-hand otaku shop that also sells doujinshi. As for "Real CP", don't be alarmed - in Japanese, "CP" is shorthand for "coupling", or pairing characters in a romantic relationship. The English anime fandom tends to call it "shipping". So "Real CP", in this instance, means shipping real-life people such as celebrities.

• At the end of Maiden's Road, there's a red shrine gate and a pentagram. These two things are usually associated with onmyouji, a title for people who performed divination and prayers in ancient Japan. From the late 80s to the late 2000s, there was something of an "onmyouji boom" in Japan. It began with the 1983 serialized novel Teito Monogatari, which re-imagined 20th century Tokyo meshed together with the occult. That novel went on to influence all sorts of anime, manga and games, such as Tokyo Babylon, Shin Megami Tensei, and Shounen Onmyouji.

• Moving back to the left again, behind the gawking eyes, there's a giant wall. This is labelled "The Heart's Wall". Think of it like an A.T. Field from Neon Genesis Evangelion.

• On the other side of The Heart's Wall, separated from society, is a big grey blob that labels this whole area "NEET Land".



- NEET Land connects with the Annual Income Wall via a doorway marked as “Livedoor”, the web portal and blog platform. Some NEETs use the Internet as a path to wealth.

- On the darker side of NEET Land, there’s one person punching another near The Heart’s Wall, with the letters “DV” next to them. “DV” is an acronym for “domestic violence”.

- To the left, there’s a big white spiky word bubble that says “The Right to Collective Defense”. This is a political term for the idea that if a country is attacked, that country’s allies have the right to come to its defense.



- Lodged within The Heart’s Wall, we can see a person hiding in a hole. Next to the hole is the word “stalker”.

- Floating up above NEET Land, there’s a giant two-way arrow that looks like something out of a board game. Starting from the square on the far right, it says “Murakami Fund”. This is the same fund that was represented in this mural as a wall next to the cliff of poverty.

- The next square to the left says “Trial by Ordeal”. Trials by ordeal were an ancient practice to determine guilt. If the person in question could survive or succeed in a painful trial, they were declared innocent. Trials by combat were the most common, but there have also been trials by fire, water, even poison.

- The next square to the left is “Murakami Fund” again.

- The next square to the left is “Rakuten”. If you remember from previous liner notes, this is the company that paired up with Livedoor to create a new baseball team, the Rakuten Eagles.

- The next square to the left is “Murakami Fund” yet again.

- The next square to the left says “Middle Margin”. In the business world, there are companies who act as intermediaries between sellers and buyers. Grocery stores, for example, are the intermediary between farmers and the people who buy their produce. “Middle margin”, then, is a term for the profit these companies make. There are several legit examples of business intermediaries... and there are also several bad examples, like paper companies that only exist to shuffle information and siphon profits.

- The final square, which ends in an arrow near the middle of the mural, says “Insurance Payout”. Apparently, if you make it through the treacherous game of business, this is where you end up.

- The arrow is pointing into a giant golden ball at the top-center of the mural, which says “money”. In fact, everything nearby is pouring into it - the Whitebands from the factory, waves from Television Saitama, and a whole bunch of lottery tickets. And it all stays behind the Annual Income Wall.

- On the other end of the game-board arrow, the far right side, there’s a man who seems to have lost his footing. The kanji on his back says “Taizou”, as in Japanese politician Taizou Sugimura. Sugimura dropped out of college in 2004, but in 2005, he unexpectedly won a seat in the House of Representatives. At just 27 years old, he was the youngest-ever member of the Diet of Japan - and it showed. His wide-eyed excitement over the perks of being a politician, like first-class tickets on the shinkansen and eating at expensive restaurants, betrayed his inexperience. His colleagues were mortified, and the media ate it up.

- The arrow that Taizou is sliding along headfirst is marked as “The Fast Track to Success”.
- This Fast Track points toward a white cloud labelled “Potato Land”. This is a play on the “Potato Party”, an annual Japanese charity concert which ran from 1985 to 2007.
- Right below the Potato Party cloud, there’s a yellow circle that says “Going through the motions of being husband and wife”. This is likely referring to the Potato Party’s founder, enka singer Shinichi Mori, and his wife Masako Mori. They divorced in 2006.
- And finally, near the base of the Fuji-esque mountain, there’s another version of the singer Cocco. This is her “now” version, after coming out of retirement in 2006. She’s belting out the words “the future”, “the present”, and “the afterlife”.

## **KAORI**

Majiru’s book is about his favorite blogger, Kaori Manabe. In tiny English text, the book says “No.Make”, which is a play on No.Mark, a photo collection she released in 2002.

## **IN SPRING, ONE SLEEPS A SLEEP THAT KNOWS NO DAWN**

This is the first line of a famous poem called “Spring Morning”, written by the Chinese poet Meng Haoran during the Tang dynasty.

## **BUDOU-GA OKA HIGH SCHOOL**

Today, the school is named after Josuke Higashikata’s high school in Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure Part 4: Diamond is Unbreakable.

## **ZHUANGZI, WHO HAD BASED HIS LIFE AROUND CAREFREE WANDERING...**

Zhuangzi is an ancient Chinese compilation of anecdotes and stories written by a Taoist sage. And this Lupin-style text is part of one of its most famous passages, “The Butterfly Dream”.

## **THE TALE OF HOICHI THE DREAMLESS**

This is another reference to the ghost story “The Tale of Hoichi the Earless”, mentioned in a previous liner note.

## **“EVER SINCE TEZUKA-SENSEI BANNED THEM, “DREAM” ENDINGS HAVE BEEN TABOO IN MANGA.”**

Osamu Tezuka, the creator of Astro Boy, Kimba the White Lion, and dozens of other foundational works, wrote a book in 1977 called How to Draw Manga. Among all the other advice in the book, he recommends staying away from dream endings, which don’t usually sit well with the reader.



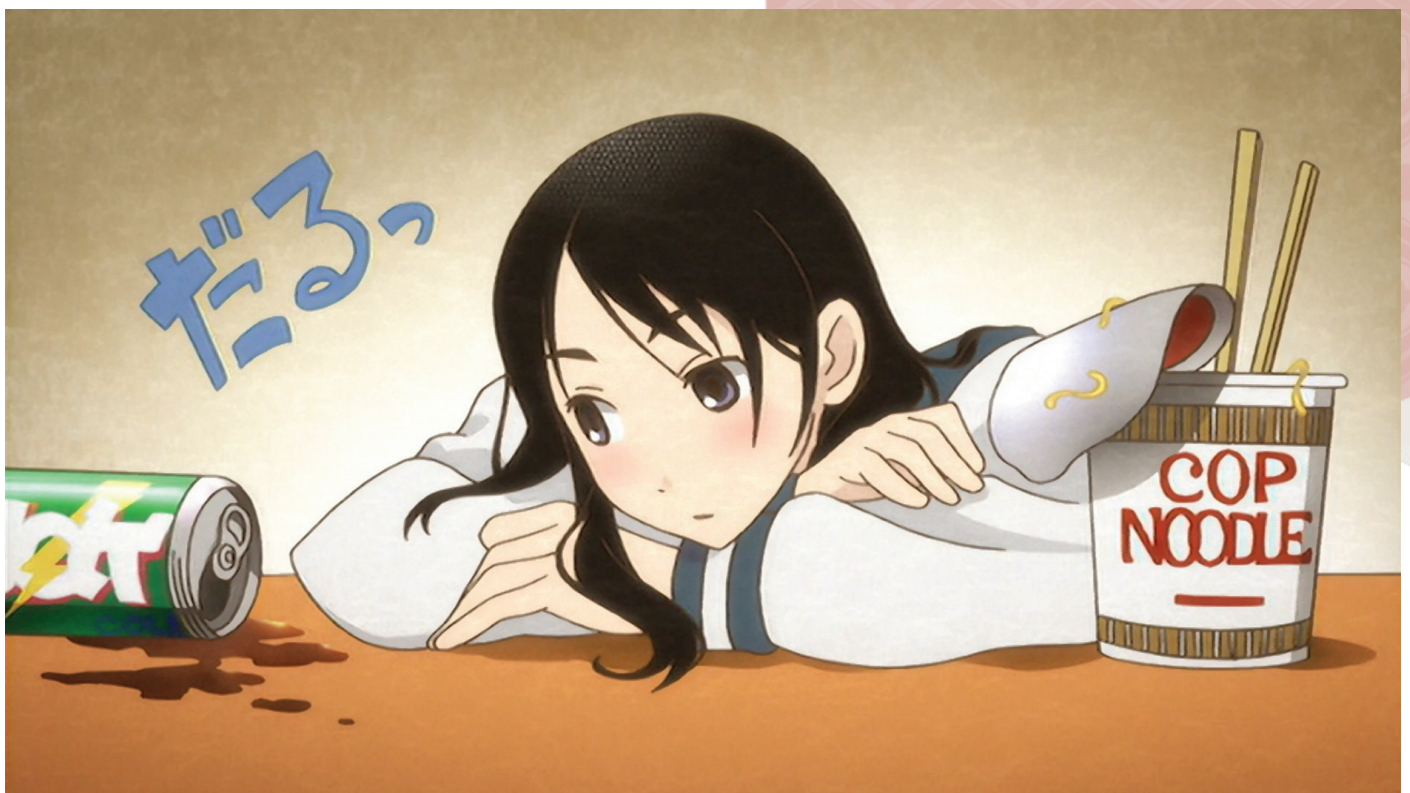
## INSIDE A DREAM

In Japanese, this is “Yume no Naka e”, which is the name of a 1973 song by Yousui Inoue. The song was incredibly popular, and ended up being used in movies, TV shows and commercials for years. Anime fans might know it best from His and Her Circumstances, which used it as an ending theme.

## AOI SHISHIDO NOMURA

Along with these three, there’s a fourth kid in the back with glasses on. That makes it hard to read his face, but from what can be seen, it’s most likely “Akama”. Put them all together, and you get Masahiko Aoi, Jiro Shishido, Hiroshi Akama, and Tadahisa Nomura - the members of a vocal group named Honey Knights. They performed songs for several anime and tokusatsu series in the 60s and 70s.

## NOT A BALANCED BREAKFAST



Eating during class is absolutely not allowed - but not only is Chiri breaking the rule, she’s eating “Cop Noodle” (a parody of the real-life ramen brand Cup Noodle) and drinking Jolt Cola. Jolt Cola first appeared in 1985, with the slogan “All the sugar and twice the caffeine.” It contained 5.9 milligrams of caffeine per fluid ounce of soda - just under the FDA’s maximum allowance of 6 milligrams. However, once other energy drinks such as Red Bull started to appear, Jolt’s market began to shrink, and the company filed for bankruptcy in 2009.

## FUSHIDARA VS. YOKOSHIMA BY PARBEE

Fushidara vs. Yokoshima is a real song, released in 1985 by a band called the Barbee Boys. Fushidara vs. Yokoshima means “Immoral vs. Evil”.

**"EVEN IF SOMEONE DIES!"**



The image in the background is a parody of Pai and Yakumo, two characters from the manga 3x3 eyes. Yakumo is fatally wounded by a demon, but Pai doesn't want him to die, and ends up using magic to merge his soul with hers.

**"EVEN IF CHARACTERS ABRUPTLY CHANGE!"**

Kaere flies onto the screen here, wearing a bikini and knee-high boots. She even has little oni horns! Basically, she looks like Lum, the main character from Rumiko Takashi's classic Urusei Yatsura.

**"AN USUI-KUN WHO COMMANDS ATTENTION!"**



Kagerou is standing in an odd pose, with his right arm crossing his body and his splayed-out left hand covering his face. This is Jonathan Joestar's pose from the cover of volume 4 of the JoJo's Bizarre Adventure manga.

**YOUR PRESENT IS IN QAR**

QAR is an abbreviation for the Qatari riyal, the currency of the State of Qatar. In 2001, the Emir of Qatar decreed that the riyal would have a fixed exchange rate with the US dollar, at 3.64 QAR to 1 USD.



## ARTHUR DARIUS GERMAINE FRANCIS

There are two other names that were too close to the sides to be subtitled: Louis and Georges. Put them all together, and you get Les Six, a famous group of six composers who lived in France in the early 1900s. They were Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Germaine Tailleferre, Francis Poulenc, and Georges Auric.

**"KOMORI-SAN IS PLAYING OUTSIDE!"**



There's a girl playing volleyball with Kiri, with her hair tied back in a ribbon. She's Kozue Ayuhara, the main character of the 1968 manga/anime series *Attack No. 1*.

## KAZE NI KAIZOU



The text here is a play on Kouji Kumeta's previous manga, *Katte ni Kaizou*. But the image is based on an actual billboard in Osaka! In real life, the sign says "Kaze ni Kaigen" ("When you have a cold, trust Kaigen"). Kaigen is a pharmaceutical company that specializes in cold medicine.

The billboard next to it should also be familiar to those who saw season 1 of *Zetsubou-sensei*. It's the Running Man, a giant LED advertisement for Glico candy that was installed in 1935, and has since become a famous tourist attraction.

Both of these billboards are near the Ebisu Bridge in Osaka, which is where Matoi's currently standing.

(And by the way, the little banners under the *Kaze ni Kaizou* sign spell out "Momoiro Kakarichou", which was Kafuka's nickname for Nozomu in the very first episode of season 1.)

## VOICE ACTORS > 2CH > MASTER

If you remember from episode 3's liner notes, Kenjiro Hata (Kouji Kumeta's former assistant) only got in touch with Kouji because voice actresses asked him to do so. Well, this is the updated version of Kouji Kumeta's "influence chart".

As the story goes, when Kenjiro Hata drew the end card for episode 5, Kouji was touched. After all, Kouji hadn't asked Kenjiro to do it, and the two hadn't been in touch for quite some time. So Kouji brought up the subject, and asked Kenjiro what prompted him to do such a kind thing.

Kenjiro answered, "It's because people were complaining about it online."

Thus, Kouji's dreams of being esteemed by his student were shattered. Even random scrubs on 2-channel held more sway over Kenjiro than he did.

## "DO BABIES DREAM?"

This line is the catchphrase from a 1975 commercial for a pediatric medicine called *Uzukyumeigan*. Made from ingredients like ginseng, herbs, bear gallbladders and gallstones from a cow, its purpose is to soothe babies who aren't necessarily sick, but just generally fussy.

## "OR STARRING IN A PA\*PERS COMMERCIAL!"

The censored name is meant to be Pampers, the American brand of baby products (such as diapers) that are sold worldwide.

## HEEEERE'S NAMI

When Nami grabs an axe and smashes through the classroom door, it's an homage to the famous "Here's Johnny" scene from the 1980 horror movie *The Shining*.





## **"TO AWAKEN THE ONE TRUE GOD MEGANEDA..."**

In 1997, political activist Mitsuo Matayoshi founded the World Economic Community Party. He was trained as a Protestant preacher, but eventually he came to believe that he himself was God, and called himself The One True God Matayoshi Jesus Christ. His ultimate goal was to become Secretary-General of the United Nations, alter the world's economic system to be based on agriculture, and send all foreigners back to their home nations. However, he was never elected.

(And of course, Kafuka's golden statue is an image of journalist Yoshiko Sakurai.)

## **"MY DREAM IS NOT YET OVER!"**

The baseball player who shows up here has an orange and black jersey that says "Hara", with the number 88. He's meant to be Tatsunori Hara, a former player with the Yomiuri Giants. When Hara retired in 1995, this line is what he said. He then went on to become the Giants' manager, and led the team to three Japan Series championships.

## **"THERE IS NO ENDING!"**

This is fitting thing for Harumi to say as she draws yaoi. After all, the term "yaoi" is a portmanteau of three phrases: "no buildup" (yama nashi), "no ending" (ochi nashi), and "no meaning" (imi nashi).

## **"HI THERE! WE'RE THE MUPPET PUPPETS!"**



This is a play on the Japanese comedy duo Puppet Muppet. The comedians are two fluffy hand puppets, a cow and a frog, and they specialize in dark humor.

Nozomu's puppets, however, are a horse (馬) and a deer (鹿). If you combine the kanji for these two animals, you get the classic anime insult "baka" (馬鹿), meaning "idiot".

## **"THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN SANMA IN MEGURO!"**

Sanma is a type of fish known as Pacific saury, and it's the center of a famous rakugo skit called Meguro no Sanma. As the story goes, a feudal lord was traveling in Meguro when he tried some grilled sanma given to him by a farmer. He loved it! Once he returned home, he asked his retainers to make him some sanma. They prepared it the way a feudal lord's fish should be prepared: steamed, with all the bones removed. But when the lord tried it, he was disappointed with the taste. This led to his famous punchline: "There's nothing better than sanma in Meguro!" (The joke is, Meguro is far from the ocean. What the lord enjoyed was the common way it was cooked, but he doesn't realize that at all.)

## **DREAMS COME TRUE'S DREAM ENDING**

The Japanese pop band Dreams Come True started out in 1988 as a trio: Miwa Yoshida, Masato Nakamura, and Takahiro Nishikawa. However, in 2003, Nishikawa left to pursue a solo career. The band continued on as a duo, and as of this writing, they're still performing.

Anime and video game fans might know the group from their collaboration with Sega. They composed the music for the first two Sonic the Hedgehog games on the Genesis.

## **"AHH! I MADE A BOO—"**

This is the start of a popular catchphrase from comedian Yoshio Kojima. The full line is "Ahh! I made a boo-boo!" ("Aa, heta koita!")

## **JANUARY 29TH, JUNE 26TH, JULY 5TH, OCTOBER 12TH, JANUARY 9TH OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR, JANUARY 18TH**

The dates in this Lupin-style text are all related to protests that happened at the University of Tokyo in the late 1960s.

- On January 29th, 1968, students in the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Medicine officially went on indefinite strike, to protest the internship system that was in practice at that time. Graduates were required by law to serve internships in their field for at least a year before they were able to take a practitioner's exam and gain a medical license. However, there was no guarantee that their internships would be paid, and they weren't allowed to hold a second job during the internship period.
- On June 26th, 1968, the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Letters also joined the strike.
- On July 5th, 1968, the students came together to form the University of Tokyo Zengaku Kyoutou Kaigi ("All-Campus Joint Struggle Committee"). The College of Arts and Sciences joined the strike.
- On October 12th, 1968, the Faculty of Law joined the strike. At that point, all ten of the university's faculties were officially on strike.
- As the months went by, the strike became more violent. On January 9th, 1969, the Zengaku Kyoutou Kaigi attacked the Minsei (another group of students associated with the Japanese Communist Party), and riot police were called to the campus. Most of the movement fell apart at that point, but those most dedicated to the cause barricaded themselves in Yasuda Hall.
- On January 18th, thousands of police stormed Yasuda Hall, and in the end, over 600 people were arrested.





## CONCEALED SOLDIER

This title is a spoof on Katai Tayama's war story One Soldier. He wrote it in 1908 after being sent to Manchuria as a war correspondent.

## HONORED ANCESTORS

When Nozomu is describing what "oyashirazu" means, we see a funeral marker sitting on a table. The name written on the stone is Mangain Kurayaminosuke ("Prince of Dark Manga") - this is the posthumous Buddhist name that Kouji Kumeta was given at his fake funeral. (See season 1's liner notes for details!)

## OYA (TSUNKU) SHIRAZU

Nozomu says that "Kago-chan and Tsuji-chan's oyashirazu are no longer oyashirazu." If you remember from a previous liner note, Ai Kago got caught smoking at age 15, and Nozomi Tsuji got pregnant and had to stop performing. Thus, these two girls' secrets are no longer secrets to their parents - or in this case, their manager, Tsunku♂.

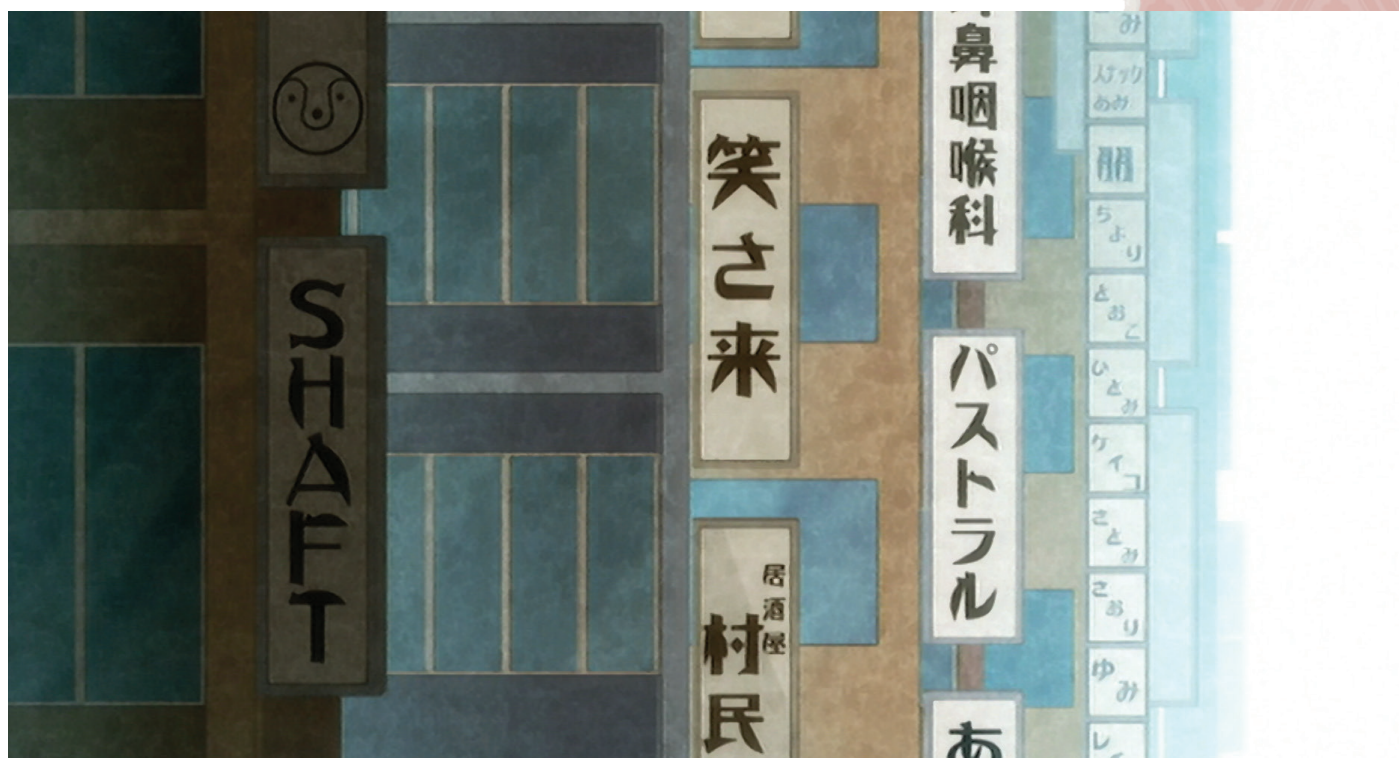
## WITHOUT HIS PARENTS KNOWING, THE CHILD VANISHED INTO THE FOAM OF THE WAVES...

This poem pasted on the wall is a real poem. Though the true author is unknown, the poem is attributed to the wife of Taira no Yorimori, a famous military commander from the Heian period. This poem is considered to be the origin of the term "oyashirazu".

## OYASHIRAZU KOSHIRAZU IS IN NIIGATA PREFECTURE

There really is an area in Niigata Prefecture called Oyashirazu Koshirazu. ("Oyashirazu" means "the parents don't know", and "Koshirazu" means "the children don't know".) It's a scenic stretch of cliffs along the ocean, about 15km long.

## SIGNS, SIGNS, EVERYWHERE THERE'S SIGNS



As Nozomu and his students go out to look for examples of oyashirazu, we're shown a row of buildings with vertical white signs:

- **SHAFT:** This is the animation company behind the Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei anime.
- **Warasaki:** This is the names of two popular Japanese izakaya combined into one: Wara-wara, and Murasaki. Murasaki has locations in Tokyo and Osaka, and Wara-wara has several locations across the country. (Izakaya, by the way, are bars that also serve food and snacks.)
- **Izakaya Muratami:** And this is another izakaya combo name. This time, it's Murasaki combined with Watami. Watami is a large chain that even has locations internationally.
- **Pastoral:** Studio Pastoral is another animation house that helped create Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei.
- **Snack Ami:** There is a long column of tiny signs on the rightmost building, which are all references to various female stars who have a connection with record producer Tetsuya Komuro. This first one is a nod to Ami Suzuki, a Japanese singer/songwriter. Her production company, AG Communication, was underpaying their artists in order to evade taxes. Ami's parents sued the company over it and won... but as a result, Ami was blacklisted from the entertainment industry. (The story has happy ending, though - in 2005, she was able to make a comeback, and as of this writing, she's still performing.) Tetsuya Komuro was her sponsor at the beginning of her career, and stayed on as her producer until her blacklisting.

- **Tomo:** A reference to pop star Tomomi Kahara. Tetsuya Komuro was her producer and eventually the two started dating. But it didn't last long, and after their messy breakup amid a string of scandals, her popularity fell and never quite recovered.
- **Tooko:** There is a female singer whose real name is unknown, but her stage name is tohko. Her debut song "BAD LUCK ON LOVE ~BLUES ON LIFE~" released in January of 1998, and stayed in the top 20 for nine consecutive weeks. Tetsuya Komuro was her producer, as well.
- **Hitomi:** This is referring to Hitomi Furuya, whose stage name is simply Hitomi. Anime fans might know her from her song "I Am", which was used as an opening song for Inuyasha. Tetsuya Komuro was the one who discovered her in 1993, when she was singing at an audition. He signed her to Avex and became her producer.
- **Keiko:** This is referring to Keiko Yamada, whose stage name is KCO. She was the lead vocalist for a band called Globe, but eventually started her own solo career. In 2002, she married Tetsuya Komuro (who was also in Globe), but sadly, the two divorced in 2021.
- **Satomi:** Satomi Fukunaga was an idol and singer back in the 1980s. She was one of the founding members of Onyanko Club, a large all-girl pop idol group. Tetsuya Komuro helped produce some of their songs.
- **Saori:** Last but not least, Saori Yagi is a former pinup idol and singer who also became an actress. Tetsuya Komuro was a fan of her work, and helped produce some of her songs as well.



## HOTEL LOVE MACHINE

“Love Machine” is the name of a Morning Musume song that released in 1999. It was a huge hit, and as of this writing, is still their best-selling single with over 1,760,000 copies sold.

## SLIPPING THROUGH THE CRACKS



Between Hotel Love Machine and Miyabi, there are two little signs in the alley. One says “My Pudding”, which is a reference to pop idol group V-U-den and their hit single “Ice Cream and My Pudding”. The other says “Angel”, a reference to their follow-up single, “Loving Angel Heart”.

## MIYABI

The other building off to the left is marked as “Miyabi”, which is the name of pop star Miyabi Natsuyaki’s photobook that she released in 2007.

## ANIMATES

This is a spoof on Animate, Japan’s largest retailer of anime and video game merchandise.

## SECRET CARDBOARD FORT

Maria and Majiru’s cardboard fort is made up of several different boxes. Most of the references on the boxes are straightforward (Shaft, Kumeta) but a couple might need clearing up. “Ice Hockey Club” is referring to Kouji Kumeta’s first manga series, Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club. And “Sawashiro Oranges” is a reference to Miyuki Sawashiro, the voice actress who plays Maria (along with many other roles across many other series!).

## THE PASSWORD IS YUUKI

“Yuuki” means “courage”, and The Password is Courage is the name of a live-action drama that aired on Fuji TV in 2000. It’s about a small town fighting back against a company that wants to build an industrial waste facility nearby.

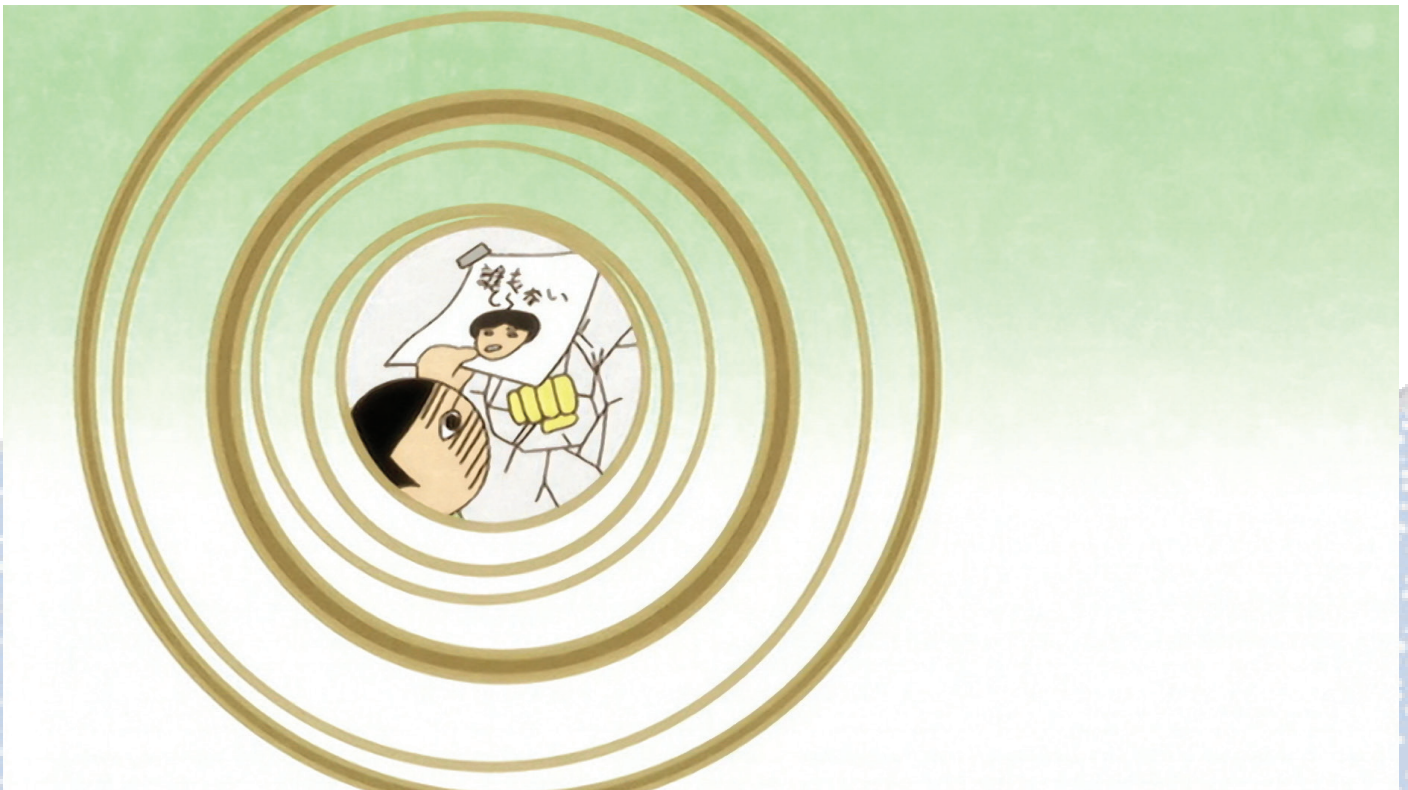
## A HIDDEN APPLICATION

There are a lot of papers strewn across the floor in the cardboard fort, and many of them are illegible. However, there’s one next to Maria that we can still read: it’s a request form to join a religious organization called “Zunzu\*\*\*\*”. This is a reference to Zunzunkyou no Yabou (“Zunzunkyou’s Ambitions”), a 1994 arcade game from Sega. You control a little jizo statue who floats around the screen shooting members of a fictional cult called Zunzunkyou.

## EMMANUELLE VISUAL BOOK

Emmanuelle is an erotic novel series that was originally thought to be written by Thai-French novelist Emmanuelle Arsan, but it was eventually discovered that the books were written by her husband, Louis-Jacques Rollet-Andriane. In 1974, the story was turned into an X-rated movie, which is probably what this “visual book” is supposed to be based on.

## “THE FIST HOLE YOU HID BEHIND A POSTER.”



The poster is for Nobody Knows, the movie about abandoned children which was mentioned in a previous liner note.



## HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER DVD

High School Teacher is a live action drama from 1993. It dealt with all sorts of social taboos like homosexuality, rape, and suicide.

## CREAM LEMON

Cream Lemon is one of the first hentai anime ever made. It released in 1984.

## BAKASU CLINIC

This is a play on Takasu Clinic, a chain of plastic surgery clinics with several locations across Japan.

## QUESTIONABLE CONTENT

There are all sorts of dubious items stacked and scattered around the room:

- Daiakuji, an erotic video game from Alice Soft
- COMIC Kairakuten, a hentai manga magazine
- A photo book filled with pictures of actress Aoi Miyazaki
- A DVD of Maido Osawagaseshimasu ("Thanks for Always Putting Up With Me"), a 1985 live-action TV series that starred a junior high school student, but also featured sexual themes and humor, along with near-nudity.

## 21ST CENTURY BOYS

This is the sequel series to Naoki Urasawa's critically acclaimed manga 20th Century Boys. The final chapter released in July 2007, bringing the whole story to a close.

## THE GREAT KING OF TERROR

The famous 16-century French astrologer Nostradamus predicted: "In the year 1999, seven months. From the sky will come the King of Terror," and many took it to mean that sometime in July 1999, the world would end.

## "HOW CAN SO MANY THINGS BE OYASHIRAZU?!"

Time for another giant list! Many of them are easy to understand, but here are the ones that might need a little extra explanation:

- **What they write on your indoor school shoes:** The Japanese tradition of not wearing shoes indoors also applies to schools. At the entrance, each student has a shoe locker where they swap out their regular shoes for a pair of lighter indoor shoes. Then, at the end of the day, they swap back. Writing on someone's indoor shoes, then, is a type of bullying where someone writes dirty things on shoes that the victim will have to wear around all day.
- **School lunches aren't free:** There have been a rising number of parents who think that, because elementary and middle school are compulsory, that lunch is provided there for free. However, this is incorrect. Municipalities pay for the labor to cook the lunch, but parents are expected to pay for the food itself.



• **Their daughter is a Fanroad regular:** Fanroad was a long-running Japanese subculture magazine that started in 1980. Though its main focus was anime, it also covered things like food, games, tokusatsu, even current affairs, and almost all of the content was generated by readers.

• **The wall scrolls hanging in your room cost 10,000 yen:** That's roughly \$100.

• **Cuckoo chicks:** Some cuckoo birds are brood parasites, which means they lay their eggs in other birds' nests. The chicks are then raised by other birds, and the original parents never see them.

• **Parties in the M\*ta family's basement:** Yoshiko Mita is an award-winning actress who's been in several films and television shows. Her second son, however, has not led a charmed life. He's been arrested at least five times, and has a record of drug abuse and physical assault. The implication here is that Yoshiko had no idea what sort of parties her son was throwing down in the basement.

• **Their son succeeding to the stage name Shozo:** Rakugo performers have stage names, and some of them are very prestigious. They get handed down through the generations, as long as the son is following well in his father's footsteps. In 1930, Takezaburo Ebina earned the name Shozo and became Shozo Hayashiya VII. However, that name wasn't passed along to his son. Instead, the "Shozo" name was loaned out to another family, and his son took up the name Sanpei Hayashiya I. Many years later, in 2003, Sanpei's son Kobuhei announced that he was reclaiming the mantle of "Shozo" for the family, and would henceforth be known as Shozo Hayashiya IX. However, his father Sanpei could make no comment on it, since he had already passed away back in 1980.

• **Their son trying to fire the Solar Ray:** This is a reference to the 1979 anime Mobile Suit Gundam. In the show, the Principality of Zeon, led by the Zabi family, had constructed a giant space cannon called the Solar Ray. However, Degwin Zabi, the Sovereign of the Principality of Zeon, had lost his heart for war. He arranged to meet with the Earth Federation and negotiate peace... But as Degwin set off in his spaceship and approached the Federation flagship, Degwin's son Ghiren ordered the Solar Ray to be fired, vaporizing both his father and a third of the Federation's fleet in one blow.

• **Their son using a notebook to kill people:** In the 2003 manga/anime series Death Note, a high school boy named Light Yagami finds a notebook called the "Death Note". It allows him to kill almost anyone, simply by writing their name in the book. He starts using it to kill high-profile criminals, which immediately draws the attention of the authorities, leading to a global manhunt. However, even though Light's father is head of the Japanese Police Task Force, he never finds out that his son is the killer.

• **Their son's manga being made into an anime:** According to interviews, Kouji Kuma never told his parents that Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei was made into an anime.

• **The current state of an anime being unknown to its birth parent (the manga creator):** Manga creators rarely have much involvement with anime adaptations. Once in a while they might be asked to give their impressions or input, but certainly not often. The anime is almost always considered a distinct creation with its own separate staff.



## THE NEW BOOK OF PROPHECY

In the manga series 20th Century Boys, a group of young boys thought up a fantastic scenario about how the future would go - villains would come to destroy the world, and they would fight back against them. They wrote down this scenario and called it "The Book of Prophecy". However, there was a second book, written by someone known only as "Friend". It was "The New Book of Prophecy", and its contents were much darker: assassinations, culling of the Earth's population, and the world falling into ruin.

If you look closely, on the wall in Zetsubou-sensei, there's another piece of paper next to this one, with an eye painted on a hand pointing up. This is very similar to the symbol that Friend wears on his mask, which is an eye painted on a hand pointing up, all enclosed within another giant eye.

## THEY DON'T KNOW THEIR SON IS HOMELESS

Nowadays, Hiroshi Tamura is part of a successful comedy duo called Kirin. However, back when he was in fifth grade, his mother died of rectal cancer. After that, his father was also diagnosed with rectal cancer, but his surgery was successful, and he lived. However, while he was in the hospital, he was fired from his company. With no income, the two eventually lost their home, and Hiroshi was separated from his father. Hiroshi ended up living in a nearby park, eating weeds to survive. In 2007, he published an autobiography about his years of poverty, titled The Homeless Student.

## I'M TIRED. I'M GOING HOME. -OKINA

Megumi Okina is an actress and singer who has starred in several films, including the original Japanese version of Ju-on: The Grudge. In 2007, she announced that she was retiring from show business. (It didn't last long, though - she was back a year later in a remake of the horror film Shutter.)

## I DIDN'T DO IT. -UEKUSA

Kazuhide Uekusa used to be an economist and professor at Waseda University, until he was caught using a mirror to peep up a high school girl's skirt in 2004. Two years later, he was arrested again for groping a 17-year-old on a train, and then attempting to hang himself with his necktie when he was caught.

## "SHOWA 83. THE TODAI RIOTS WERE STILL RAGING ON."



You might remember from a previous liner note that Showa 83 doesn't exist. It would equal out to the year 2008 (the year this show aired).

As for the Todai Riots, "Todai" is a nickname for the University of Tokyo ("Tokyo Daigaku" in Japanese). So this is a reference to the student protests of 1968 that

were mentioned in the earlier Lupin-style text. In fact, the building that Nozomu is hanging from looks just like Yasuda Hall, which became a battleground between occupiers and riot police in January 1969.

## **APPARENTLY YOU SHOULD TOSS PULLED UPPER TEETH ON THE ROOF AND LOWER TEETH UNDER THE FLOOR**

It's an old custom in Japan that, once your baby teeth fall out, you should throw the upper teeth on the roof, and put the lower teeth under the floor. The idea is that it will guide your new incoming teeth, and help them grow straight and strong.

### **ZEN-ZA**

This is another allusion to Kafuka's Zenkoku Zashiki-warashi Renmei ("Nationwide Zashiki-warashi Alliance"). Though the Zashiki-warashi Alliance isn't a real thing, during the actual protests, each student group would wear helmets of a specific color, with identifying names or symbols on them.

### **KINSAKUJI**

This episode's next episode preview is a play on Yukio Mishima's novel *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, called *Kinkakuji* in Japanese. It's loosely based on an actual arson event at the Kinkaku Temple in 1950, and tells the story of a Buddhist acolyte who is determined to burn down Kinkaku Temple.

"Kinkaku" means "golden pavilion", but "Kinsaku" means "a way of making money". So in this spoofed version of the story, someone has decided that they need to burn the temple down and collect the insurance payment. The would-be arsonist declares that "If a single pillar stands, it won't be declared a total loss" - this is based on an urban myth that if part of a burned building is still standing, even if it's just a single pillar, then the insurance payout won't be as large.

Also, "the palatial estate of the Egawas" is referring to Tatsuya Egawa, the manga author who created *Golden Boy*. He's since moved on to making adult films and appearing on TV shows.

## **EPISODE 7**

### **MONSTER HUNTER FOR 2 HOURS A DAY!**

"Don't play video games for more than one hour per day" was a famous quote from Takahashi Meijin, an executive at the video game company Hudson Soft. He meant it as a friendly piece of life advice, but gamers largely took it as an admonishment. Here, it looks like the Zetsubou-sensei staff are instead recommending a 2-hour daily dose of Capcom's *Monster Hunter*.

### **LOL IF THAT RATHIAN PLATE DOESN'T DROP**

This is also related to *Monster Hunter*. "Rathian Plate" is an item that comes from the wyvern Rathian - but your chances of getting one are very low.



## **DELIGHTFUL MR. YIAN KUT-KU**

Yian Kut-Ku is another monster from the Monster Hunter series. It looks like a cross between a dinosaur, a dragon, and a bird. It also has very standard moves for a monster, which makes it fighting it a great way to train and improve one's skills. Thus, fans have given it the nickname "Yian Kut-Ku-sensei".

## **I'M GONNA MAKE YOU SHOKO-SHOKO**

Hatsune Miku was the first in a series of characters released for Yamaha's voice synthesizing software Vocaloid. Users could create music and have Miku sing whatever they wrote, which was revolutionary at the time. In 2007, ika\_mo used the Vocaloid software to write a song called "I'm Gonna Make You Miku-Miku", and uploaded it to the Internet. The song was so popular that it came to represent the entire Japanese Hatsune Miku boom that happened in the late 2000s.

So then, what is "Shoko-Shoko"? This is a reference to Shoko Nakagawa, a Japanese celebrity with close ties to anime and tokusatsu shows. She started releasing music records in 2006, and by 2008, she was already popular enough to put on a nationwide tour.

## **"WOAH! IT'S LIKE I'M A HUMAN POWER PLANT!"**

This is a line from the manga series Solitary Gourmet. It's the straightforward story of a man who likes eating alone, so we, the audience, get to hear his thoughts as he visits different restaurants and tries different foods. Specifically, the "human power plant" line is from a chapter where he eats yakiniku.

## **UP UP DOWN DOWN LEFT RIGHT LEFT RIGHT B A**

This powerful spell that Meru's typing into her phone is a real-life thing called the Konami Code. It all started with Konami's release of Gradius for the NES, where players could input this sequence and their spaceship would get most of its powerups. After that, almost every Konami game featured a variation of the code - most famously Contra in 1987, where it gave the player 30 extra lives.



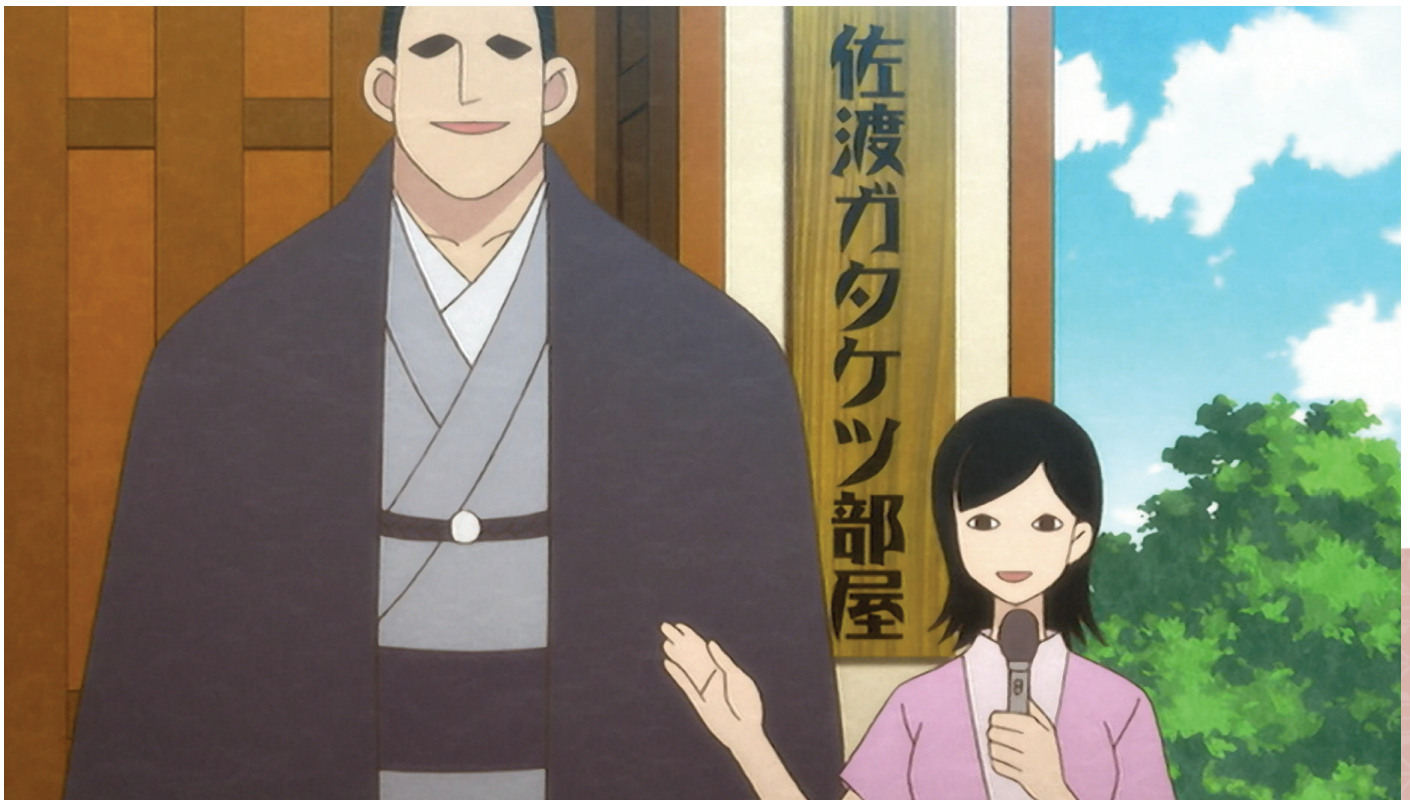
## ***I THINK MY WIFE MIGHT HAVE WALKED OFF WITH MY PLASMA TV...***

This long Lupin-style text is made up of two different anecdotes, and both of them are from Testuya Takeda, the editor in charge of the Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei manga for Weekly Shounen Magazine. Presumably, these are stories that he's told a million times.

## ***THE CAT THAT WAS TOLD A MILLION TIMES***

This is a spoof on the title of a 1977 children's book written by Youko Sano, called The Cat Who Lived a Million Times.

***"CAN WE ASSUME THAT YOU EAT A LOT OF YOGURT?"***



The man being interviewed is a parody of Kotooushu Katsunori, a professional sumo wrestler who was born in Bulgaria. He debuted in 2002, and by 2005, he had reached champion rank. His stable was Sadogatake, where he stayed until he retired in 2014.

The interviewer is asking him about yogurt because yogurt is an important cultural dish in Bulgaria. Not only has it been made there for millennia, but the scientist who discovered the yogurt bacterium was Bulgarian. However, just because yogurt has history in Bulgaria, that doesn't mean every Bulgarian eats yogurt all the time.

***"THIS IS AMU\*\*-CHAN."***

The lady in the pink rabbit costume is supposed to be Japanese pop superstar Namie Amuro. Early on in her career, Namie was one half of a musical duo called "Sister Rabbits". When they performed, Namie Amuro and Ranran Suzuki (the other half of the duo) dressed up in fluffy rabbit costumes - Ranran's suit was grey, and Namie's was pink.



## "LIKE, "AMU\*\*! HERE I GO!"?"

"Amuro! Here I go!" is an iconic line from Mobile Suit Gundam. The pilot Amuro Ray shouted this line whenever he was deployed into battle.

Also, as the man tells his joke, there's a rising, chime-like sound. This is also from Mobile Suit Gundam. Amuro Ray was a Newtype, which meant he had heightened mental abilities; and whenever he used those abilities, that sound effect would play.

## "HELLO, SUNDAY EDITING DEPARTMENT!"

The banners hanging from the ceiling are all pictures of Hayate Ayasaki from Hayate the Combat Butler. However, his skin has been changed to varying shades of blue and green, almost like he's a Garmillas from Space Battleship Yamato.

## WI\*\*NG ELEVEN 10

The censored name is meant to be Winning Eleven, a popular soccer video game series from Konami that started in 2001 and, as of this writing, is still going. The series was initially known as Pro Evolution Soccer in the US, but is now called eFootball.

## SHOJI KISA HONNA MUTEKI

These people all have real surnames on their faces: Shoji (東海林), Kisa (象), Honna (本名), and Muteki (無敵). However, the kanji used for these names all have much more common meanings: "Tokai forest" (東海林), "elephant" (象), "real name" (本名), and "invincible" (無敵). People will usually think of the common meaning first, and even if new acquaintances don't actually think your last name is "elephant", they'll be sure to mention how funny it is.

## YOU CAN DO THE FACE BLOCK MOVE, RIGHT?

The Face Block (or "Kamen Block") is Ryo Ishizaki's trademark skill from the famous soccer manga Captain Tsubasa. Ryo is a kid with a round face and a buzz cut, so any similar-looking soccer player has probably heard this joke before.



## JUUBAN HIGH SCHOOL

Today, the school is named after the high school in Sailor Moon. Several of the main characters were students there in the final arcs of the series.

## PROBLEMATIC STATEMENTS 2007

In 2006, Sony released a game called Mainichi Issho (“Everyday Together”) for the PlayStation 3. It featured two cartoon cats, Toro and Kuro, as they went about their daily lives.

One of the game’s modes was called ToroStation, and in it, the two cats would perform a daily news segment. The news was usually about fluffy subjects like games, sports, or cooking - but since Toro and Kuro delivered their lines like a comedy duo, sometimes Kuro’s remarks were surprisingly cheeky.

This was also a time when internet video was becoming more and more popular. As users flocked to the newly-launched site Nico Nico Douga, some people took it upon themselves to record Kuro’s “problematic statements” and make funny compilation videos out of them. Thus, “Problematic Statements 2007” refers to the 2007 edition of one of these ToroStation videos.

## BISHOUJO CLUB 21 31

Bishoujo Club 21 is an idol group that was formed in 2003 from winners of the All Japan National Bishoujo Contest. It was, as the name stated, a group of 21 girls. However, in 2004, the group added 10 more members, and the name had to be changed to Bishoujo Club 31.

## YOU'RE TOO SOFT, DANGO ♥

There is an actual manga called You’re Too Soft, Dango (“Amaizo, Dango”), though it’s a comedy manga about a magnanimous boy and his misadventures with family and friends. Putting a heart mark in the title seems to change the tone of the story, somehow.

## THE BACK OF THE CLASS

As Nozomu addresses his students, there’s a suspicious student in the back of the classroom, second row from the right - it’s Chitan Tsubouchi from Katte ni Kaizou.





### **"I BET YOU'RE GOOD AT SOCCER!"**

Captain Tsubasa is a soccer-based manga series that's been mentioned in a previous liner note, and its influence really can't be understated. The manga ran from 1981 to 1988, and to date, has sold over 82 million copies. It was really popular.

### **"HOW FANCY, YOUR TOILETS AND BATHS USE DELICIOUS ROKKO WATER!"**

The joke here is that "Delicious Rokko Water" was the name of an actual bottled water brand in Japan. The American equivalent would be something like, "Your toilets and baths use Perrier!"

### **"IF YOU MARRIED MEGUMI, SHE'D BE MEGUMI MEGUMI, HUH?"**

Toshiaki Megumi is a comedian/actor/newscaster, and MEGUMI is the stage name for Furuya Megumi, a famous actress and singer.

### **"I'VE LOST ALL HOPE IN A WORLD THAT TELLS THE SAME JOKE A MILLION TIMES!"**

It's time for another one of Nozomu's screen-cluttering lists!

- **The Ayu isn't on a\*?:** "The Ayu" is a model of cell phone from Toshiba, and the censored word is "au", a mobile phone operator. In Japanese, both of those names are pronounced the same, hence the joke.
- **Tokyo Disneyland isn't in Tokyo:** It's true. Tokyo Disneyland is actually located in a city called Urayasu, in Chiba Prefecture.
- **One smile, please:** At McDonald's restaurants in Japan, one of the menu items is "Smiles: 0 yen". It's meant to convey the idea that the staff is friendly; no one expects customers to actually place an order for a smile.
- **Does Vienna coffee have a Vienna sausage in it?:** Vienna coffee is espresso topped with whipped cream and cocoa powder. Vienna sausage, meanwhile, is a thin smoked sausage made from pork and beef. For the record, no, there is no sausage in the coffee.
- **Are the Kinki Kids brothers?:** The Kinki Kids is a pop music duo consisting of Koichi Domoto and Tsuyoshi Domoto. They have the same last name, but it's just a coincidence; they're not related.
- **Chichi is the mom:** In Akira Toriyama's Dragon Ball series, Chichi is Goku's wife and the mother of his children. However, in Japanese, the word "chichi" means "dad".

• **Ichinichibun no Yasai drink comes in various sizes. Which is the real one?:** Ichinichibun no Yasai is a vegetable drink, sort of like V8. The name means “One Day’s Serving of Vegetables”... but which size does that refer to?

• **I thought there was an academy called Ooizumi Gakuen at Ooizumi-gakuen Station:** “Gakuen” means “academy”, so one would expect a train station called “Ooizumi-gakuen” to be near an “Ooizumi Academy”. However, that’s not the case. The station got its name for being in a residential area full of schools, but none are specifically called Ooizumi Academy.

• **Famicom master \*\*\*\*hashi Meijin must be amazing in bed:** If you remember from a previous liner note, Takahashi Meijin’s big claim to fame was that his hands were so fast, he could tap the buttons on a Famicom controller 16 times per second. We’ll let you put the rest together.

• **Which prefecture is Shimane in?:** Shimane is a prefecture, but it’s the second-least populous one in all of Japan. As of 2021, 665,000 people live there, which is much less than in some cities.

• **Where are Trinidad and Tobago?:** Another geography joke. Trinidad and Tobago is the name of a singular country in the Caribbean, with a population of about 1 million people. In 2006, they qualified for the final stages of the World Cup for the first time, which brought them international attention.

• **Nakata looked like a jerk in The Miya\*\*\*\* Tsune\*\*\*\* Story:** In 2006, there was a manga published in Weekly Shounen Magazine about the Japan soccer team’s captain, Miyamoto Tsuneyasu. Hidetoshi Nakata, one of the team’s most popular members, was in the story, too... but for some reason, he was made to look like a villain.

• **He’s the criminal, I know it!:** This is a popular line in shows that revolve around cops and robbers. Think Zenigata from Lupin III, or Ryoutsu, the silly-yet-strong policeman from KochiKame.

## OSIM AND WINE

Japan’s head soccer coach, Ivica Osim, had a terrible stroke in November 2007. It put him into coma for almost three weeks. But he came out of it, and after a week or so, his appetite and humor were returning. Though alcohol was prohibited in the hospital, Ivica joked that he’d like some wine with the hospital-food fish they were serving him.

## NIPPON HAM’S SASAKI TALKS ABOUT SUMMER COMIKET!

This is referring to Kiyoshi Sasaki, former pitcher with the Nippon-Ham Fighters. His hobby was drawing manga. He even went so far as to draw pictures from Ah! My Goddess, Tenjho Tenge, and Rurouni Kenshin for the team’s newsletter.

## HOW LONG WILL IGAWA’S HAIR GET?

Kei Igawa played for the Hanshin Tigers from 1998 to 2006, and one of his trademarks was his relatively long hair that went down to his shoulders. However, he signed a contract with the New York Yankees in 2007, and as part of the team rules, he had to cut his hair. He didn’t seem to mind, though. His response to reporters was, “I feel refreshed.”



## WHY DO I HAVE TO BECOME AN ADULT? HOW SOON WILL I BECOME AN ADULT?

These captions are actually lyrics from a song called "Boyhood" by Tetsuya Takeda. It was used as the theme for the sixth Do-raemon film, Nobita's Little Star Wars.

## FUNERAL PARADE OF ROSES

This is the title of a 1969 movie about a homosexual man in Tokyo who kills his mother and sleeps with his father. It was meant to be a twist on the Athenian tragedy Oedipus Rex.

## THE ROSE BRIDE

In the anime series Revolutionary Girl Utena, members of the student council have swordfights over who has the right to claim the Rose Bride, a girl named Anthy Himemiya.

## MAIDEN'S ROAD

If you recall from a previous liner note, Maiden's Road is an area in Ikebukuro with a high concentration of shops devoted to female yaoi fans.

## TOUCHING MOMENTS ARE BEING STOLEN

This is a line from that over-the-top movie piracy PSA mentioned in an earlier liner note. It's the one where a woman cries a single black tear, which slowly runs down her face, then drops into a pool of black water and morphs into a skull.

## "NEW"-TANI RYOUKO... I'VE HEARD IT A MILLION TIMES. PLEASE, ENOUGH ALREADY!! YOU DUMMIES.

Ryouko Shintani is the voice actress who plays Nami. The "shin" part of her last name (新) can mean "new", when read on its own. Thus, Ryouko New-tani.

## "PLEASE REFRAIN FROM MAKING COMMENTS! THEY'VE HEARD IT ALL A MILLION TIMES!"

The little drawings behind Nozomu are all examples of tired, terrible jokes.



• **A\*\*hi Beer HQ in Asakusa:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, the Asahi Beer headquarters in Asakusa features a giant gold structure called “The Asahi Flame”. However, thanks to its unfortunate shape, it’s colloquially known as “The Golden Turd”.

• **Hiroshima’s Takuya Ki\*\*\*\*:** Takuya Kimura was a baseball player with the Hiroshima Toyo Carp. But there is also an incredibly famous singer and actor named Takuya Kimura. Even the kanji in the two men’s names are similar. (The baseball player: 木村 拓也 The singer: 木村 拓哉)

• **Schools of “Law and Economics”:** The Japanese term for “Law and Economics” is houkei (法経). However, the term for phimosis is also houkei (包茎).

• **Annus hid a urine sample in his butt:** Adrián Annus was a Hungarian hammer thrower who won the gold medal in the 2004 Summer Olympics. However, his medal was stripped away just a few days later, after his drug test showed signs of tampering. Apparently he had smuggled in someone else’s urine sample to hide the fact that he was doping.

• **Nikaido-san lives on the third floor:** Nikaido is a real name, but “nikai” can also mean “second floor”. So basically, “Mr. Second Floor lives on the third floor”.

• **Inukai-san has a pet cat:** Similarly, Inukai is a real name, but the kanji for it can also be read as “owning a dog” (犬飼). So basically, “Mr. Owns-a-Dog owns a cat.”

• **A Matsuko who’s popular:** There’s a 2006 movie about a teacher named Matsuko. She takes the fall for her student’s crime, and is shunned from society as a result. The movie’s English title is Memories of Matsuko, but the original Japanese title is Kiraware Matsuko no Issho, which means “The Life of Matsuko, Who Was Hated”.

## LITTLE MAN JAPAN

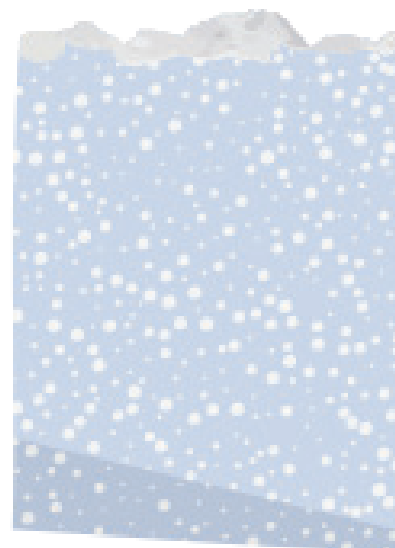
This is a play on Big Man Japan, a 2007 mockumentary about a man who can grow to 30 meters in size, and works for the defense ministry to fight against kaiju.

## SISTER OF MINE

This is the name of a popular TV series from 1994, starring Emi Wakui. The Japanese name for the show is Imouto Yo (“Sister of Mine”), but it was known in English as Tokyo Cinderella Story.

## ZETSUBOU 1,000 PERSON SURVEY!

There was a variety show that aired in Japan for over 30 years called Waratte itomo (“It’s Okay to Laugh”). It featured a segment called the “1 in 100 Survey!”, which went almost exactly like you see here. 100 random people in the audience were given buttons that they could press, and then the guest of the day would come up with a statement or question that they thought only one out of the 100 people could answer with a yes. Once the statement was made, snappy music would play, the camera would zoom around the audience, and a big number board would tally up how many people pressed the button. If only one person pressed it, the guest succeeded, and they would win a cell phone strap modeled after the show’s host, Kazuyoshi Morita.





## HORRORS OF THE GLASSES

The poster in the background is a parody on *Horrors of the Black Museum*, a 1959 slasher film starring Michael Gough.

## THE MONSTER WITH A HUNDRED EYES MEGADON

And this second poster is a play on the 2005 kaiju flick *Negadon: The Monster from Mars*. It's very similar to the actual movie poster.



## ZETSUBOU ONDO

“Ondo” is a style of Japanese music with a swung 2/2 rhythm. It’s a common style in Japanese folk music and older festival dances. In fact, the Zetsubou Ondo is a parody of Tankoubushi, a folk song from the southern prefecture of Fukuoka. The original song starts with this line:

*Tsuki ga deta deta, tsuki ga deta (The moon came out, came out, the moon came out)*

And then goes on to describe the beauty of nature in and around the coal mine where this song was first sung.

Nozomu’s ondo, meanwhile, starts with this line:

*Maru ga deta deta, maru ga deta (I got d\*\*\*\*\*, got d\*\*\*\*\*, I got d\*\*\*\*\*)*

He uses the word “maru” here as a censorship marker, to avoid saying the word “depressed”. He then goes on to describe his shame at singing poorly and going to a concert alone.



During a quick cut, we see Nozomu's black silhouette against a neon green background, with his noose and glasses drawn in bright white. This is a spoof on a popular series of ads from 2003 for Apple's iPod music player, where people in black silhouette danced with bright white iPods against intensely colored backgrounds.

### **ZETSUBOU DISPERSAL!**

Kafuka's attack move, with the ring of fire and projectiles blasting towards the screen, is based on Sailor Mars' Burning Mandala attack from Sailor Moon.

### **ITOIRO FOODS COOKING IN ABOUT THREE MINUTES**

This is based on an actual cooking program called Kewpie 3-minute Cooking. It started in 1963, and as of this writing, is still going today.

The sponsor of the show, Kewpie, is a food company most famous for their mayonnaise. And their mascot is a chubby little cupid figure called a Kewpie doll, made by a different company in America called Jesco. But this is why we're shown Nozomu as a little naked doll.

In fact, the show's entire opening has been spoofed here. In the original show's opening, the Kewpie doll is in a kitchen, standing in front of a jukebox. Then the shot switches to a record player with "Kewpie" written on the tone arm, and all the records look like cross-sections of different vegetables like carrots and onions. And finally, multiple pictures of Kewpie dolls appear on the screen, and they twirl in circles while changing into different outfits.

Meanwhile, in the Zetsubou-sensei version, the Nozomu doll is in a casino, standing in front of a pachinko machine. Then the shot switches to a record player with "Zetsubou" written on the tone arm, and all the records are decorated with different methods of suicide. And finally, multiple pictures of Nozomu appear on the screen, and they twirl in circles while changing into different outfits.



## SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF THE CASINO



The text “murmur murmur...” (ざわざわ...) is an onomatopoeia frequently used by manga author Nobuyuki Fukumoto. What’s more, Kewpie-Nozomu is standing in front of The Bog, a nigh-unbeatable pachinko machine from Fukumoto’s gambling manga Kaiji.

### SOY SAUCE 1/4 CUP

The label on this bottle of soy sauce is a spoof on the real-life soy sauce brand Kikkoman. “Kikko” means turtle shell, and “man” means 10,000 - in Japanese folklore, turtles live to be 10,000 years old, and are symbols of long life and happiness. Thus the Kikkoman logo is a hexagon (like the shape you would find on a turtle shell), with the kanji for “10,000” inside.

On the Zetsubou-sensei version, there’s still a hexagon, but instead of a kanji inside, it’s a picture of Nozomu’s face.

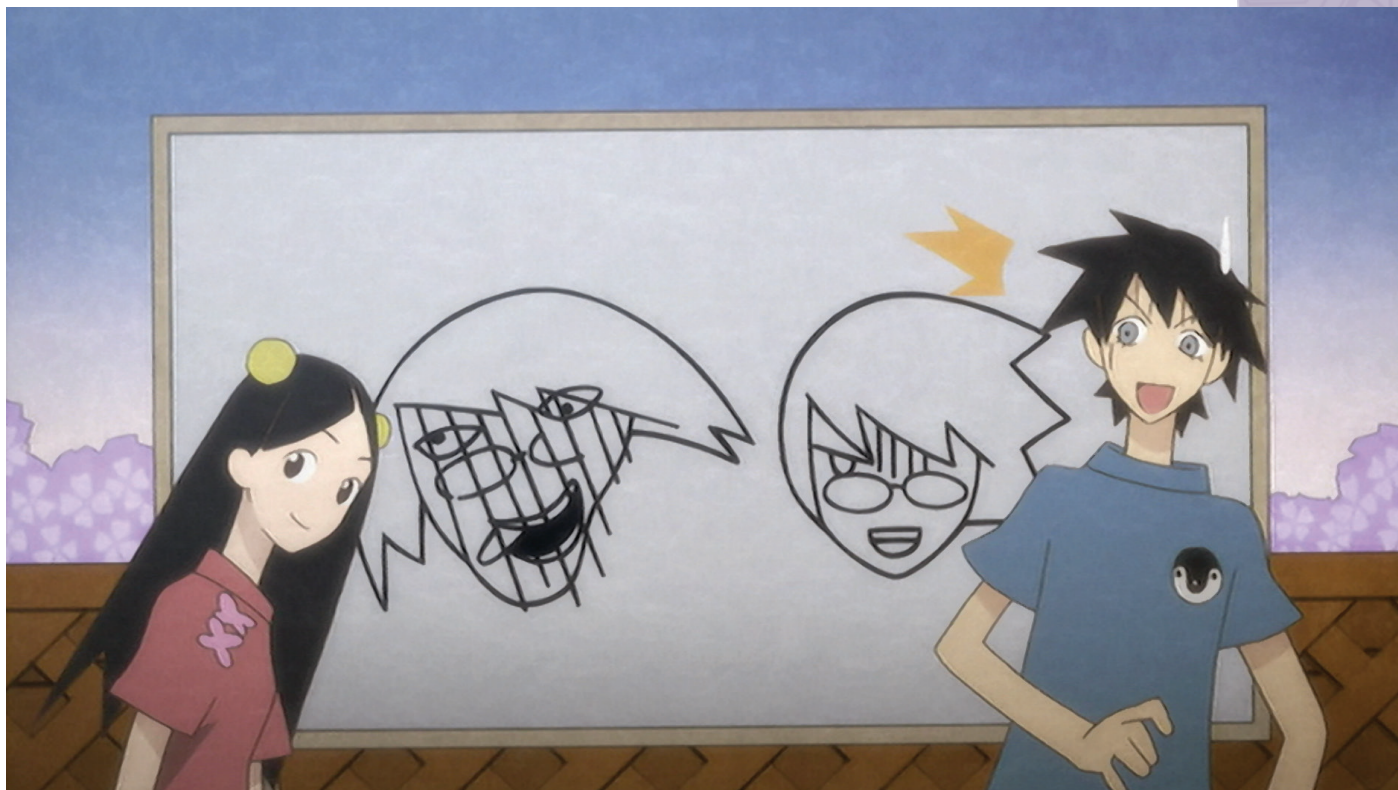
### SEE? WASN'T THAT EASY?



As Kaere says this, we're shown a picture of a man with permed hair, painting on a canvas. This is none other than Bob Ross, the American painter who hosted *The Joy of Painting* from 1983 to 1994. He used a wet-on-wet oil painting technique that allowed him to make a complete painting from start to finish in the timespan of a 30-minute episode.

However, we're pretty sure he never painted a picture of Konata Izumi from *Lucky Star*.

## THE ZETSUBOU-SENSEI DRAWING SONG



This is a parody of “The Spoo Drawing Song”, which was a skit on the live-action children’s show *Okaasan to Issho* (“Together With Mother”). Spoo was one of the show’s mascots: a cute, fluffy little creature with wings on its head. So the hosts, a man and a woman, both drew Spoo on a white board while singing an elaborate song about it.

The man’s drawing was fine. Cute, even! The woman’s drawing, meanwhile, was an abomination. It was so unintentionally terrifying that viewers called it “Devil Spoo”, and memes about it spread like wildfire all across the Internet.

## THE REST OF THE STORY?

During the “next episode preview” that plays here, manga panels flash by quickly in the background. Here’s what they say:

- “K-Kamen Teacher Zetsubou!!”
- “Ahahaha! It’s been a while, girls!”
- “It... was cardboard?”
- “Chiri-chan?!”
- “What is... this feeling? Sensei’s despair is entering my heart... It’s such a terrible, heavy sense of hopelessness... Like all the sadness in the world put together!”
- “I’ll be with you soon... sensei...”
- “Goodbye, everyone...”



Also, there's a note under the last panel that says: "The author is on hiatus, so this story will not continue in the next issue." Figures.

## **JAPANESE PERSONALITY. ACTRESS. ESSAYIST. HOST. UNICEF GOODWILL AMBASSADOR. ROOM.**

This bit of Lupin-style text is referring to Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, an actress and philanthropist known for her charitable works. "Room" at the end is a nod to Tetsuko's Room, a TV show she started in 1975. It was the first talk show on Japanese television.



### **RED RIDING HOOD SLEEPS, BE CAREFUL**

This title is actually a mashup of two different things: Be Careful, Red Riding Hood, a 1969 novel by Kaoru Shouji; and "Kurosu Sleeps", a chapter in the PC visual novel Cross Channel.

## **IN THE INTERVIEW EXAMS THAT ARE STRESSED THESE DAYS, YOUR FATE IS DECIDED INSIDE OF THREE MINUTES...**

Considering the next segment is all about exams and test takers, consider this Lupin-style text to be a friendly piece of advice... or a warning.

## **TSUGARU CORRESPONDENCE LEARNING**

This is a play on the Osamu Dazai book Tsugaru Tsuushin ("Correspondence from Tsugaru"). The joke is that "tsuushin" means "correspondence", but here it's been changed to "tsuushin kyouiku", which means "correspondence learning".

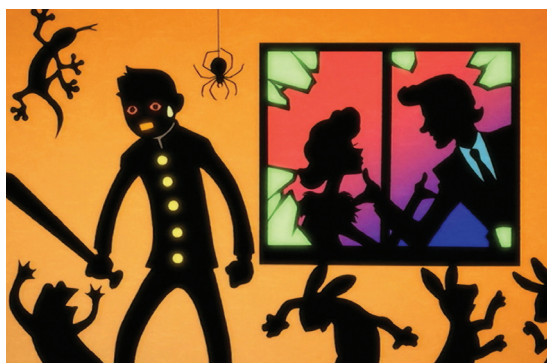
## **TAKE A SIP**

Nozomu sits at his table in the café, drinking a glass of Calpis (called "Calpico" in the US) with a delighted expression on his face.

How can we tell it's Calpis? Well, though the soft drink has no mascot today, that wasn't always the case. Back in 1919, Calpis held an international contest to help struggling European painters after World War I. German painter Otto Dünkelsbühler won third place, and Calpis ended up commissioning him to draw a mascot. What he came up with was a caricature of a black man with big lips and a Panama hat sipping from a glass in a pose identical to the one Nozomu is making.

That picture, called the Kokujin Maaku ("Black Man Mark"), was used on Calpis packaging from 1923 until 1990, when The Association to Stop Racism Against Blacks issued a complaint and the logo was dropped.

## **"HE CAN'T HELP IT, HE'S A TEST TAKER!"**

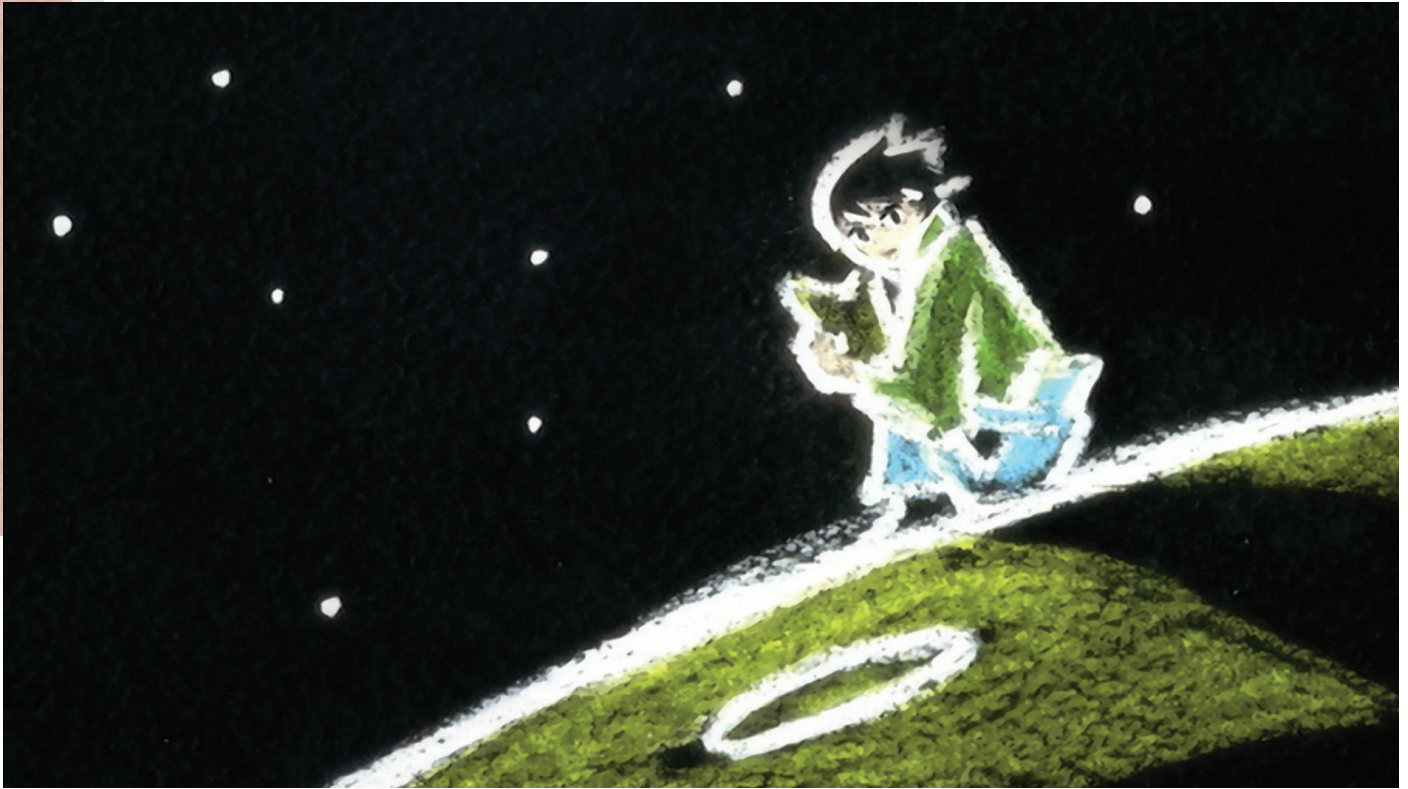


In the scene where the test taker has broken a window with a baseball bat, there are frogs and rabbits dancing on the ground. These are an homage to Choujuu-jin-butsu-giga ("Animal Caricatures"), a famous set of four scrolls from the 12th and 13th centuries. They feature drawings of frogs, rabbits, monkeys and more all playing and dancing and getting into mischief.

## **TAP-SELLING GIRL**

In Japanese, “tap-selling girl” is tappu-uri no shoujo. This is a play on Macchi-uri no Shoujo, or in English, The Little Match Girl, a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen. It’s the story of a poor little girl on the street who sees beautiful visions of happy things in the matches she lights, but eventually the matches run out. She then freezes to death, but her kind grandmother carries her soul to Heaven.

## **IT'S A SMALL WORLD**



Shortly after the animation style changes to pastel drawing animation, we see Nozomu alone on a little asteroid out in space. It’s a reference to The Little Prince, the novella by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The prince in the story lived all alone on a little asteroid, with only a rose for company

## **PAPER BEARS**

When the style swaps to cutout animation, Chiri is surrounded by little bears. They’re modeled after the grey wolf in Tale of Tales, a 1979 film by Russian animator Yuri Norstein.

## **KEWIKO AND MANAVU**

Nozomu’s certification book is based on a real-life magazine called “Keiko and Manabu”. It’s a monthly magazine that covers education options for everything from hobbies to career changes.

## **PHOTO BY WATANABE HIROSHI**

The person who took these photos, Hiroshi Watanabe, is an animator and director who’s worked on several well-known anime like Slayers, Samurai Champloo, and Jing: King of Bandits.



## **K-TAKA'S SUPER FINGER TECHNIQUE COURSE**

"K-Taka" is referring to Taka Kato, an adult film star. For reasons that shall be left unsaid, he has the professional nickname "Goldfinger".

However, the person you see teaching the class isn't actually Taka Kato. It's Kazuyoshi Sakai, a professional wrestler. Likewise, the student (who gets copied and pasted five times) is Norikazu "Glasses" Fujioka, another wrestler. Remember them for the next liner note...

## **I'LL TAKE 10 RINGSIDE TICKETS TO THE MUSCLE MARTIAL ARTS TOURNAMENT, PLEASE**

Kazuyoshi Sakai and Norikazu "Glasses" Fujioka were both participants in the Muscle Martial Arts Tournament, which started in 2004.

## **"YOU KNOW, IT'S KINDA FUN TO PASS TESTS, ISN'T IT?"**

As Nozomu says this, his thin, airy appearance is drawn in the style of Sexy Commando Side Story: That's Amazing!! Masaru-san, a popular comedy manga from 1995. The main character, Masaru, often made similar expressions.

## **"THERE ARE A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE CERTIFIED EDUCATORS, BUT ARE UNQUALIFIED TO LIVE!"**

Kouji Kumeta went to college to be a teacher, but gave up on it because there weren't enough job openings.

## **KAFUKA IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS**

The animation switches here into a psychedelic style reminiscent of Yellow Submarine, the 1968 animated film featuring The Beatles and their music.

## **DEATH EXAM TESTING SITE**

The Japanese here is "shikaku shiken kaijou", which means "qualification exam test site". It would normally be spelled 資格試験会場. However, the first kanji (資, pronounced "shi"), has been swapped out with the kanji for "death" (死, also pronounced "shi").

## **PRACTICE DEATH**

The word "moshi", which means "practice exam", is spelled 模試. However, here again, the "shi" in moshi has been swapped out with the kanji for "death".

## **I AM A NELLO**

The story in this next episode preview is actually a mashup of two different books: I Am a Cat by Natsume Souseki, and A Dog of Flanders by Marie Louise de la Ramée. Nello is the main character in A Dog of Flanders, and "that mongrel dog" is his dog Patrasche.

As for "those Rubens paintings I had wanted to see", that's referring to The Elevation of the Cross. It's an enormous, 15'x11' oil painting in three parts, which Paul Rubens painted in 1610. The left panel shows a wailing crowd along with the Virgin Mary and Saint John; the right panel shows the two thieves being prepared for execution; and the largest, middle panel shows Jesus having just been crucified, and a multitude of soldiers straining to lift the weight of the cross. The painting currently resides in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp, Belgium.

# EPISODE 8

## *PLEASE! TEACHER*

This is the English name of a popular anime from 2002 (the original name is Onegai Tiichaa). It's about a boy who suffers from a rare disease, his teacher who is also an alien, and the bizarre set of circumstances that cause them to pretend to be married.

## *WHEN SUMMER COMES, SO DO THE MEMORIES.*

In 1949, Yoshiko Ishii wrote a song about flowers blooming in the marshes of Oze. It was called "Summer Memories", and it became so popular that it actually boosted tourism in Oze. This is the first line of that song.

## *IMPRISONMENT NOT TO EXCEED SIX MONTHS OR A FINE NOT TO EXCEED 500,000 YEN.*

Under the Anti-Stalking Act, this is the prescribed penalty for a stalker. (500,000 yen is approximately \$5000.) The line about "two hours scolding" isn't part of the law - it's just the price Nozomu had to pay.

## *THE PENSION PROBLEM SOLVED?! INVADE A CERTAIN COUNTRY?! MORNING CURRY?!...*

Later on in this episode, you'll hear Kafuka talk about "positive counterintelligence". This Lupin-style text is a bunch of real-world examples of that concept at work:

- **The pension problem solved?!**: If you recall from a previous liner note, millions of people's pension records were lost in 1997, and the error wasn't discovered until May 2007. In July 2007, before the upper house election, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party issued statements that the pension problem would be resolved by the end of March. However, that was "positive counterintelligence". A few months later, the government admitted that they would likely never be able to fully restore all the missing pension data.
- **Invade a certain country?!**: In 2005, a former computer programmer posted a fake news story on a website designed to spoof Yahoo Japan News. The headline was "Chinese Military Invades Okinawa", and it caused quite a stir before it was taken down.
- **Morning curry?!**: The newest food fad in 2008 was "eating curry for breakfast". Talk shows ran stories about how curry "stimulates your brain". Thus, if you're a student studying for a big test, why not eat a plate of curry? Even the famous baseball player Ichiro was said to eat curry in the morning, and people claimed it was the source of his power.
- **If you work, you lose?!**: "NEETs" were a relatively new concept in 2004. One anonymous, self-proclaimed NEET was interviewed on a Fuji TV Wide Show called



Tokudane!, where he said, “The way I see it, if you work, you lose. I consider myself a winner.” This instantly went viral. (By the way, the anonymous man reappeared on Nico Nico Douga in 2011, and announced that he was looking for a job. The Internet was crushed.)

• **New S\*ga hardware?!**: This is meant to say “New Sega hardware”. Sega had been making video game consoles since 1983. However, in 2001, after the failure of their Dreamcast console, Sega announced that they would be leaving the hardware business, and focusing on software development instead. But then, in August of 2007, Sega applied to trademark the name “Dreamcast”! The Internet was ablaze with rumors that Sega might return with a new console. But in reality, Sega was just protecting their trademark, nothing more.

• **Pani Poni greenlit for a second season?!**: Pani Poni Dash! is another SHAFT production. And no, it didn’t get a second season. This is SHAFT’s very own positive counterintelligence.

## "SPINEAPPLE PUDDING

This title is a twist on Pineapple Pudding, an essay collection from the Japanese novelist Banana Yoshimoto.

## IPPEIDO RAMEN

The name of this ramen shop is a mashup of two separate things: Hakata Ippudo, a restaurant chain known for its tonkotsu ramen; and Ippei-chan, a popular brand of instant tonkotsu ramen.

## GOJIMA ELECTRONICS

And the name of this shop is a play on Kojima Electronics, a large electronics chain that’s been in business since 1963.

## HI-TECH GOODS

Nozomu is pricing out a “Roulie”, which is meant to be a Rolly, Sony’s egg-shaped rolling speaker from 2007. Hopefully he got a good deal, because they were discontinued by 2009.

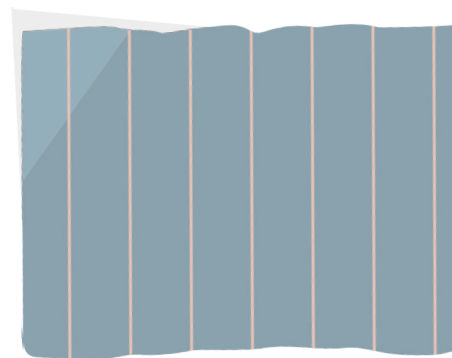
Another item we see is “Gigabeat”, which was a real thing - it was a line of digital media players from Toshiba, launched in 2006. But again, the name is being intentionally misspelled. In the show, it’s written as 戯画ビート, with the first two kanji meaning “caricature” or “cartoon”. However, the real Gigabeat logo was written in English.

## "...YOU'RE GONNA UPLOAD YOUR FINDINGS! I JUST KNOW IT!"

As the worried shopkeeper says this, text is flowing from right to left behind him. This is one of the defining characteristics of Nico Nico, the Japanese video-sharing service: users can leave time-synched comments that scroll across the screen. And these particular comments are:



- What a scam
- The difference is huge...
- This store deserves to go bankrupt!!
- Thanks for the upload
- I’m gonna use this as a reference
- So expensive!
- Tell me more
- Thanks
- Okkusenman!! (this is an off-topic reference to the famous Japanese meme song “Omoide wa Okkusenman”)



## KAKAKU.C\*M

Kakaku.com is a price-comparison shopping website. It started in 1997, and as of this writing, is still going strong.

## STRIVING TO HAVE THE LOWEST PRICES IN THE WORLD

This is a slogan from Kojima, an electronics store in Japan. What's more, the sun with Maeda-kun's face in it is a spoof on the Kojima logo. Although Kojima stores are technically still around, the company was acquired by another electronics chain, Bic Camera, in 2012.

## SPY & SPY

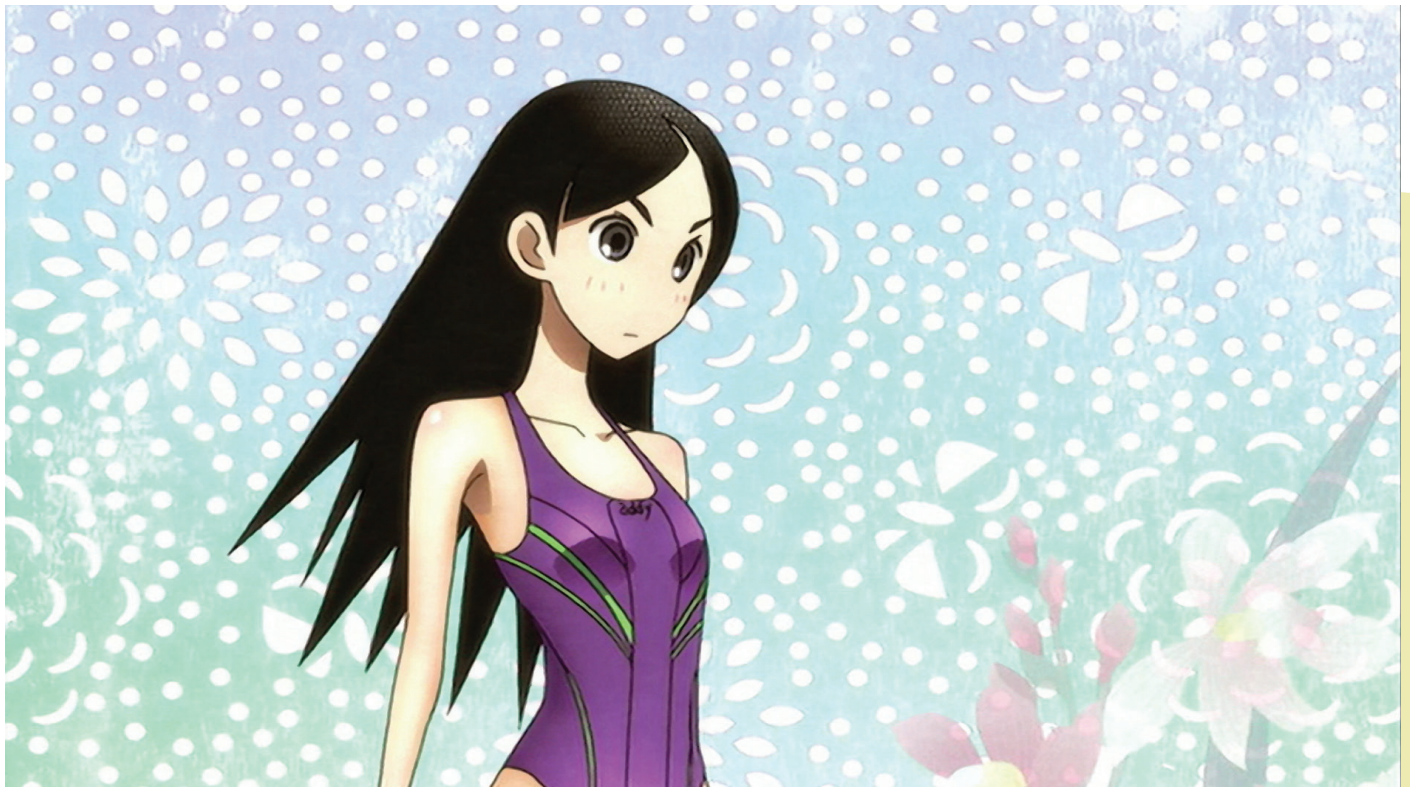
"Spy vs. Spy" is an American creation that started out as a comic strip in Mad Magazine. It featured two spies - one dressed in white and one dressed in black - who were constantly trying to one-up each other with deadly booby traps. Eventually, the characters made their way into a video game, and that video game made its way to Japan. But strangely, even though the title is clearly スパイvsスパイ ("spy versus spy"), it's usually read as スパイ アンド スパイ ("spy and spy").

## BECAUSE I'M A BAD PERSON

Famous calligrapher Mitsuo Aida released a book in 1984 called Ningen da mono ("Because I'm Human"). Then, in 1995, a radio program called Hikaru Ijuuin's Late-Night Superpower twisted the phrase into Dameningen da mono ("Because I'm a Bad Person"), and used it as the title for a popular segment full of bad stories about bad people.

## "THAT SWIMSUIT..."

Chiri's swimsuit looks suspiciously like Evangelion Unit-01 from Neon Genesis Evangelion.



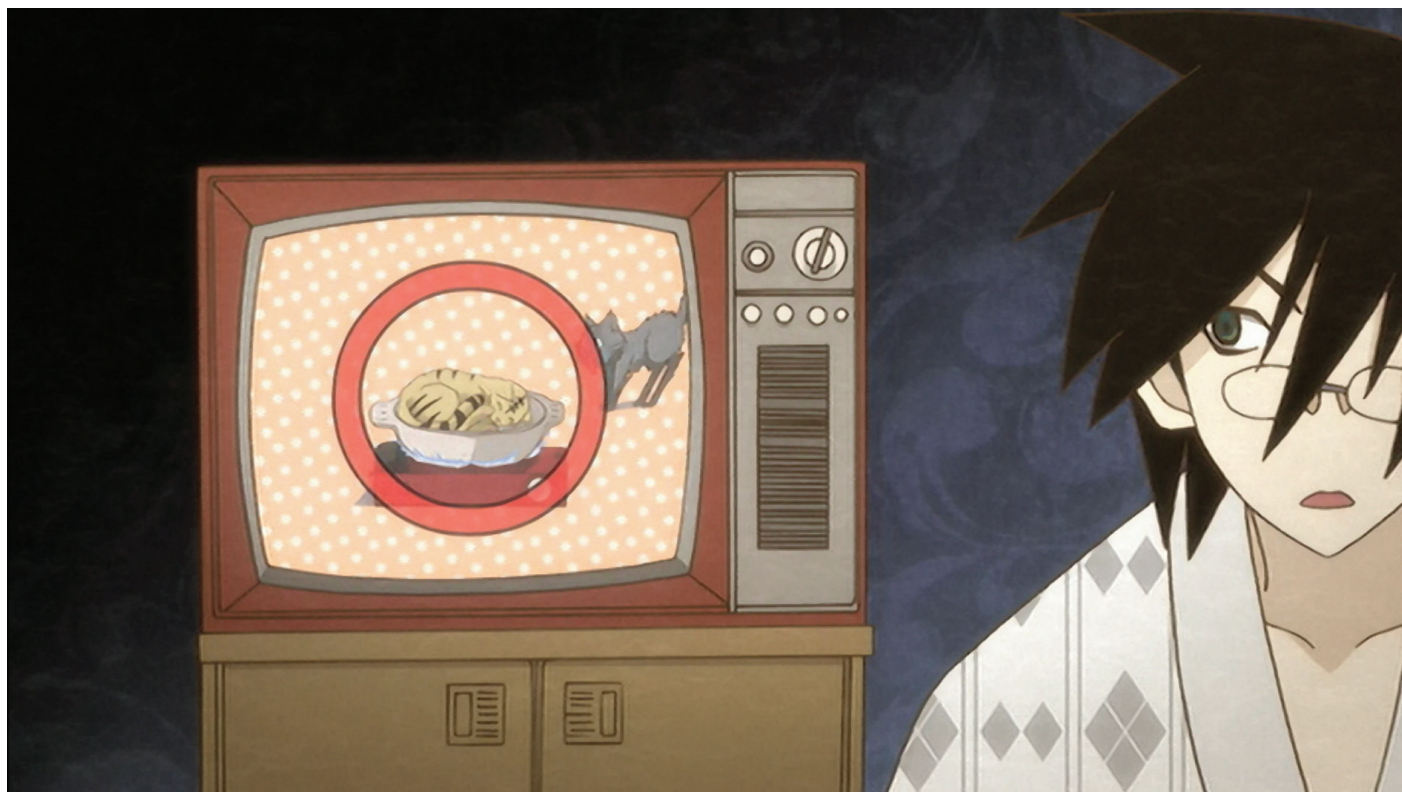
## THIS TAPE WILL SELF-DESTRUCT

The "prohibited" actions on the TV behind Nozomu are a hand lighting a fuse, and a man in black rappelling down from the ceiling. Both of these are nods to Mission Impossible, the 1966 American TV series that became a set of popular Tom Cruise movies in the 1990s.



## GOOD CONTENT

The first “accepted” action on Nozomu’s TV is a picture of a cat sleeping in a clay pot. This is a reference to “nekonabe” (“cat hot pot”), a video first posted to Nico Nico Douga in 2007. Nabe pots are normally used to make stew; but in the video, several empty pots were all laid out on a table, and a bunch of cute kittens were using them like beds.



## SCIENCE AND GROWNUPS MAGAZINE

This magazine is called “Science and Grownups” (“otona to kagaku”), but there’s a real magazine called “Science for Grownups” (“otona no kagaku”). The real-world version comes with kits to make neat things like mini printing presses or record players... but apparently Chiri’s version comes with tools to perform espionage.

## THE THEORY OF INNATE GOODNESS

Mencius was a Confucian philosopher who developed the Theory of Innate Goodness. Essentially, he thought that all people were born with four “seeds” which, if nurtured, could grow into virtues - or, if neglected, could lead to vice. The four seeds are: 1) concern for others, 2) a sense of shame, 3) a sense of humility, and 4) a sense of right and wrong.

The list that quickly flashes on screen is a modern otaku’s version of the four seeds.

## SOMEWHERE INSIDE SUMMER C\*\*\*\*\*

This censored name is, of course, Summer Comiket.

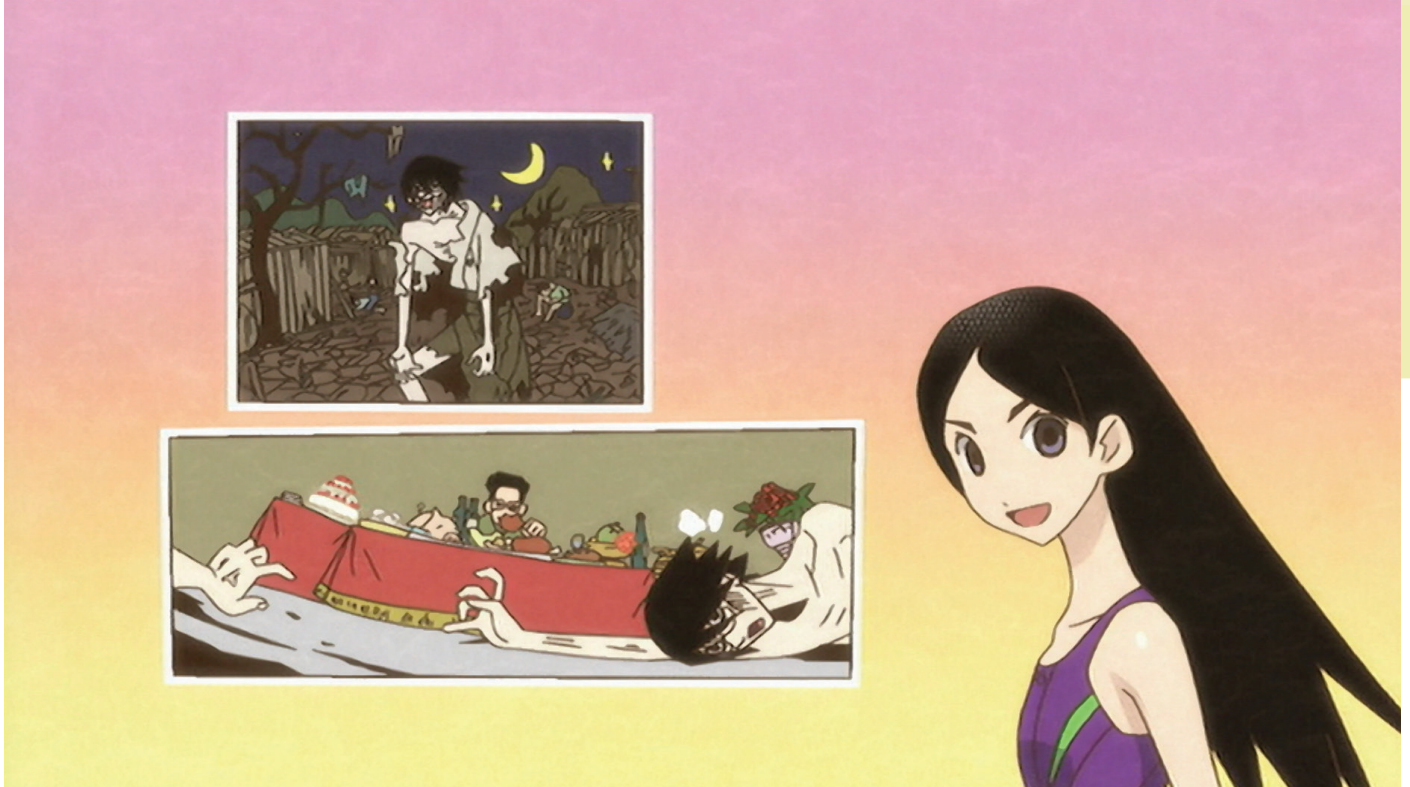
## DIG HERE! WOOF, WOOF

The cover of this doujinshi is very similar to a Japanese DVD cover from Gintama season 2. (Volume 5, to be exact.) It’s Hijikata Toshiro sitting on Yamazaki Sagaru, who just so happens to be a spy.

## TP-DON

The name on this missile is a shortening of Taepodong, a three-stage rocket developed by North Korea. It was intended as a technology test for developing intermediate-range ballistic missiles. The first time it was launched, in 1998, it passed over Japan and landed in the Pacific Ocean. Then they tried again in 2006, with the upgraded Taepodong-2. But this new version failed 40 seconds after it launched.

**"IF YOU GO THERE TWICE FOR UNKNOWN REASONS, YOU GET FLAGGED BY PUBLIC SECURITY!"**



Technically, Nozomu has been to this “certain country” twice! It’s just that both stories are in the manga, and neither one has been animated.

Chiri is showing panels from both stories. The top picture is from chapter 76, when Kafuka suggests that if Nozomu lived in an impoverished nation, he would cherish every gift he was given. And the bottom picture is from chapter 40, when Nozomu decides to travel abroad, to “an ideal nation where all citizens [are] equal co-owners of all assets.”

**"YOUR SPYING ORDERS, COMRADE ITOSHIKI!"**

Nozomu has a lot of items to investigate!

- **The love lives of kids in Shibuya:** In the 2000s, Tokyo’s Shibuya ward was the epicenter of “gyaru” fashion - a type of subculture that rebelled against traditional Japanese ideas of feminine beauty. But it was also a scene plagued with the problems of paid dating and women preying on men.

- **General trends of Center Test questions:** “Center Test” refers to the National Center Test for University Admissions, a type of standardized test for would-be college candidates. Sometimes questions get reused over the years, and sometimes shady students take advantage of that.



• **How many crow's feet Marukawa Tamayo has:** Tamayo Marukawa is a TV Asahi television announcer who entered the world of politics in 2007. However, it wasn't exactly a smooth transition. When she showed up to cast her ballot in the election, it turned out that she wasn't registered to vote. Not only that, but she hadn't voted in the last six elections, either. Rumors also began to spread that she hadn't paid her municipal taxes. Basically, she had a lot of reasons to start getting wrinkles.

• **The actual water temp in those Netto Yuba commercials:** This is referring to Super Jockey, a comedy game show that started airing in 1983. One of its most popular segments was the "Netto Comaasharu" ("Hot Water Commercial"), where sponsors could get advertising for free! All they had to do was bring in a bikini model, and have her sit in a tank of (supposedly) scalding hot water. However long she could stay in the tank, that's how long they had to advertise their product.

• **The fluffy secret of Funwari Meijin mochi puffs:** Usually, mochi is thick and chewy. Funwari Meijin mochi puffs, however, are light and airy. How is this done? No one knows for sure; it's a company secret.

• **How much Mr. Aso really knows about Ruroni Kenshin:** Japanese politician Tarou Asou is well-known among otaku for his positive stance on anime and manga. He's also a manga fan himself, or so he claims. However, on a diplomatic trip to Mexico in 2007, he visited a local school, and one of the children asked him about the manga series Rurouni Kenshin. To the Internet's shock, Mr. Aso didn't know the answer.

• **How episode 11 is coming along → Will it be done:** Sounds like Nozomu needs to sneak into the SHAFT offices and see if everything's still on schedule.

• **Kisaragi Miki's cause of death:** Kisaragi is a 2007 film about a fictional C-list celebrity named Miki Kisaragi. Miki commits suicide, and one year later, five of her biggest fans come together to try and solve the mystery of how she died.

• **The master craftsmanship concealed in folded book covers at Animate:** When you buy books in Japan, it's common for the staff at the store to wrap the covers before you leave. The cover wraps at Animate are generally clear, but also very fragile, which means the staff there must have a special amount of skill.

• **The color of M.G.'s shoes:** When is the last time we saw Maeda-kun's (aka MAEDAX G's) shoes...?

• **That girl you like:** This is another reference to poor Assistant Director Naoyuki Tatsuwa, and his interview answer about Zetsubou Experiences: "The girl I loved had a boyfriend."

**THIS MESSAGE WILL BE REUSED IN RECYCLED PAPER PRODUCTS.**

You know, instead of self-destructing, Mission Impossible-style. It certainly is the more eco-friendly option.

## BERRYZ KOBO CONCERT

Berryz Kobo was a real band. They formed in 2004 as part of the Hello! Project music collective, and their best-selling single was a cover of the disco song "Dschinghis Khan".

## MEIOU-ZA THEATER

This is a play on the Ginza Theater, a famous kabuki theater built in 1889. They've swapped out the "gin" in Ginza which means "silver", and replaced it with "Meiou", which is the Greek god Hades.

## NOW PLAYING: EF

As mentioned in previous liner notes, the anime series Ef: A Tale of Memories and Ef: A Tale of Melodies were both animated by SHAFT.

## COMING SOON: HIDAMARI SKETCH X 366

Hidamari Sketch x 365 is the sequel series to the original Hidamari Sketch. It's another anime series produced by SHAFT. The title is "366" on the movie poster, though, because 2008 was a leap year - which means 366 days instead of 365.

## ANONYMOUS: 2007/08/29 (WED) I BET YOU'RE A SHOGAKUKAN AGENT.

As mentioned in a previous liner note, Kouji Kumeta's previous manga, Katte ni Kaizou, was published by Shogakukan. But Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei ended up being published by Kodansha. In an interview with Shogakukan's Arakawa Hiromu, Kumeta said, "I feel like a double-agent for jumping ship."

What's more, the post date on this comment (8/29/07) is the publication date of the manga chapter that this episode is based on.

## "EVERY LAST BIT OF SECRET INFORMATION I KNOW!"

Nozomu is ready to spill the beans! However, most of his information is related to the manga industry. In fact, you could say that this is actually information that the author, Kouji Kumeta, knows.

Most of the items on the list are self-explanatory, but here are the ones that might not be clear:

- **The mystery behind what order the stories run in:** With magazines like Weekly Shounen Jump, it's clear that the popular stories run at the front of the magazine, and the lower-tier stories run towards the back. But when it comes to Weekly Shounen Magazine and Weekly Shounen Sunday (both of which have published Kouji Kumeta's work), the rules aren't so straightforward. It's kind of a toss-up what order the stories will appear in, which leads fans to speculate on what it all might mean.

- **The name of Suzuka's baby:** This is referring to the manga series Suzuka by Kouji Seo. It ended in September 2007. Meanwhile, the manga version of this Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei spy story first ran in August 2007 - right before Suzuka was about to publish its long-awaited finale.

- **Araki Hirohiko's secret to staying young:** Hirohiko Araki is the creator of Jojo's Bizarre Adventure. Though he's been drawing manga since the late 70s, fans have begun to notice that he doesn't seem to age. Even nowadays, he still has a rather youthful appearance. This has led to (joking) theories that maybe he's a vampire, or perhaps he's using the power of the Ripple to slow down his aging process.

- **The budget at an AI company:** "AI company" is a tongue-in-cheek way of saying AIC, which stands for "Anime International Company". They're the animation studio behind shows like Tenchi Muyo and El Hazard. In October 2007, someone at AIC leaked a detailed budget spreadsheet for the show Bamboo Blade, and revealed that the cost was about \$100,000 per episode.



## OUR BELOVED ITOSHIKI NOZOMU IS FACED WITH THE GREATEST DANGER OF HIS LIFE!

If you look closely, Nozomu's last name - Itoshiki - is spelled differently on this title card. It's supposed to be 糸色, using the kanji for "string" and "color". But here, it's 愛シキ. This is a stylized way of writing 愛しき, which is also pronounced "itoshiki", but means "beloved".

So why the swap? It's just a little computer humor. When you type in Japanese, the software you're using will try to predict what kanji you want to use (since typing directly in kanji would be nigh impossible). So if you type "itoshiki", 愛しき is the first spelling that will be automatically recommended to you.

### DOES ANYONE HAVE A REASON TO SAVE HIM?

This is a reference to the ending of the PlayStation 1 game Final Fantasy IX. Near the end, the main character Zidane goes back into dangerous territory to save his enemy. When Zidane finds him, the enemy asks, "What are you doing here? I thought I told you to go..."

In the English translation, Zidane answers, "Wouldn't you do the same for me if you knew I was dying?" But in the original Japanese, Zidane's line is, "Dareka o taskeru no ni riyuu ga iru kai?" ("Do I need a reason to save someone?")

### THE CAT'S MEOW



Chiri, Abiru, and Maria, dressed in brightly colored leotards, are supposed to be the girls from Cat's Eye. It's a 1980s manga/anime series about three sisters who become art thieves to try and find their missing father.

In the opening sequence for the Cat's Eye anime, the backgrounds are littered with English text pulled from an article about Shaker furniture. It has nothing to do with the show; most likely, the text was just pulled from whatever English newspaper or magazine the animation staff could get their hands on. For Japanese viewers, it's a nice-looking effect - but for English speakers, it's comically nonsensical.

That same effect has been recreated here in Zetsubou-sensei, but at least this time the text is from the English Wikipedia article on Cat's Eye.

## **WE MAKE OUR DASHI WITH HAPPY TURN CRACKERS!**

Happy Turn is a popular brand of rice crackers in Japan. They're coated in a sweet-and-salty mixture that the company calls "happy powder". However, though they might be great for a snack, they would be a terrible base for dashi (soup stock).

## **WHISPER WHISPER WHISPER**

The word "whisper" is "hiso" (ヒソ) in Japanese, which is what you see flying all over the screen in the background. Take a close look, though, and you'll notice a couple other words sprinkled in: miso (ミソ), and arsenic (ひ素, technically 砒素, pronounced "hiso").

## **"WHY AM I SUDDENLY BEING FLOODED WITH UNTRUSTWORTHY INFORMATION?!"**

There is a bunch of written "information" floating around Nozomu's head in this scene. Here's what it all says:

- If you count every hair follicle on your body, she'll love you back
- If you talk about your cell phone on your cell phone, you get charged extra
- If you play Tales of E\*\*thsea backwards, it's actually good (This is meant to be Tales from Earthsea, a 2006 Studio Ghibli movie based on a novel series by Ursula K. Le Guin. The novel series is beloved, but the movie was not well received.)
- If you get the multiplication table for 7 wrong, a cat comes up to you
- If you do a dogeza bow seven times in one day, you'll die
- The real Mic\*ey is in China (We promise, the real Mickey Mouse is not in China.)

## **"IN CHINA, PANDAS ARE ALL WHITE!"**



The panda used for Nozomu's example is an all-white version of Genma Saotome, the father who turns into a panda from Ranma ½.



## **THIS MIGHT SOUND LIKE A FALSE RUMOR, BUT THE NEXT CHAPTER WILL BE IN COLOR!**

The manga version of this story was chapter 107, published on August 29, 2007. And they weren't lying - the next chapter, 108, really did have color pages!

### **"NOW THEN, WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IN NEXT WEEK'S SAYONARA, ZETSUBOU-SENSEI?"**

Kafuka prances around in silhouette during this "preview", but she looks a bit different... She's styled after the main character of Sazae-san, the longest-running anime in history. This little skit, where she clicks a remote and brings up a picture in the top-left corner of the screen, is almost a shot-for-shot copy of the next episode previews in Sazae-san.

Also, the face in the corner is a bootleg version of Haruhi from The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya. Keep it in mind, it'll show up again in a later episode.

### **CONSTITUTION ARTICLE 9**

Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution outlaws war as a means to settle international disputes. The text of the article states:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be sustained. The right to belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

It was established on May 3, 1947. And this part of the Zetsubou-sensei episode is all about what happens in May.

## **GREENPIA. FOOD TRIALS. ON FRIDAYS, WE HAVE CURRY. WORKING WOULD BE A FELONY...**

The Lupin-style text here covers all the same subjects as the Lupin-style text earlier from earlier in the episode. However, instead of "positive counterintelligence", these are all examples of "satsukibare" - a secret being revealed.

- **Greenpia:** 2007's lost pension records scandal wasn't the only problem the Japanese public had with the government's pension department. Just a few years earlier, people were starting to take a close look at Greenpia, a chain of health resorts that the government had built using pension premiums. Most of the Greenpia locations never made any money, and what's more, they were used as a place for politicians to hold cushy high-ranking jobs after retiring. In the end, the Greenpia facilities were sold off to local governments and private companies, but at a substantial loss.

• **Food trials:** China may not have invaded Japan, but that didn't mean everything was sunshine and rainbows between the two countries. In early 2008, ten Japanese people suffered severe food poisoning after eating gyoza that were made in China. The dumplings contained methamidophos, a type of pesticide. The same pesticide was then found weeks later in a shipment of meat buns. This was just the latest in a string of recalled Chinese imports, and 83% of Japanese people reported being worried about food safety. (The culprit was eventually arrested in 2010 - a disgruntled man at the gyoza factory in China allegedly injected the food with pesticide on three different occasions.)

• **On Fridays, we have curry:** It's a longstanding custom that the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force eats curry every Friday. Originally, it was to notify a ship's crew members of the correct day of the week. Then the tradition stuck, and today, each ship even boasts its own special curry recipe. (But they don't eat their curry for breakfast!)

• **Working would be a felony:** This is a bit of wordplay. The verb "to work" is hataraku (働く), but this same word can also mean "to commit (a crime)".

• **S\*ga's new hardware:** As mentioned in the previous liner note on this subject, the truth was quickly revealed - there was no new Sega hardware.

• **\*\*\*\*\*-sensei's manga is getting a live adaptation?:** The censored name is meant to be "Akamatsu-sensei", as in Ken Akamatsu, the author of Negima!: Master Negi Magi. Negima got a live-action series in 2007, which ran for 25 episodes.

## WHEN THE EXPOSURES BEAR FRUIT

This is a play on Touson Shimazaki's 1919 novel, When the Cherry Blossoms Bear Fruit.

## AFTER ALL, IT'S...

There's a bit of kanji mischief afoot here. The word that Nozomu uses at the beginning of his sentence is 所謂, pronounced "iwayuru". It means: "put another way", or "so to speak". However, the kanji we see on the screen is 所詮, pronounced "shousen". It means: "after all". As you can see, the kanji for the two words are very similar, and even native Japanese speakers tend to get them confused.

## THAT PREPARATION-H REALLY UPS YOUR ECCHI GAME, HUH?

The original Japanese line here is, "Muhi ga kikun da yo ne." ("Muhi works really well, you know?") Muhi is a brand of anti-itch medicine in Japan, usually used for bug bites and heat rashes. It's probably not something you want to bring to a romantic encounter.

## IF YOU TRAINED AT MANGA DOJO, YOU STUDIED UNDER MASTER TOMINAGA, THEN?

There was a TV show that ran from 1976 to 1994 called Comedy Manga Dojo. It was set up vaguely like a game show; the host would present a theme, and then a panel of artists would make drawings about it. One of the show's many recurring guests was Ichirou Tominaga, a manga author who was most famous for his racy manga Chinkoro-neechan.



## BLAZING SPEED MANGA

This was the name of a challenge on Comedy Manga Dojo. The artists would all gather around a single drawing board, where they were presented with a theme, and a letter (for example, “things that swing” starting with “ku”). Then they’d all run up and quickly draw their ideas, and the artist with the best one would be decorated with a Hawaiian lei.

## I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT BUDDHA!

The original joke here is “douzou o douzou” (銅像をドーズー), since “douzou” can mean both “bronze statue”, and “here you go”. So he’s saying, “Here you go, a bronze statue.”



## THE BABY SHE CRADLED

This is a line from the 2006 anime Welcome to the NHK. More specifically, it’s a line from the show’s first ending song, “Odoru Akachan Ningen”, which was sung by Kenji Ohtsuki (the same artist who sings the openings for Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei).

## I MEANT WITH THE X68000...

The X68000 was a home computer released by Sharp in 1987. It ran an operating system called Human68k, with a user interface called “Visual Shell”. However, the X68000 was only ever sold in Japan, and it was discontinued in 1993, so the odds of needing to use it nowadays are pretty slim.

## THERE ARE ALSO BENEFITS UNIQUE TO “LAUNCH DAY FAILURES”

When the PlayStation 2 released in Japan, the very first model, SPCH-10000, had a bug in its DVD Player software that allowed any NTSC disc to be played - even discs from other regions. Subsequent models did not have this bug, but if you were able to get that first model, you reaped the benefits.

## GOJOIN HIGH SCHOOL

Today’s school name comes from Denji Sentai Megaranger, a tokusatsu series from 1997. Footage from the show was used to make the American TV series Power Rangers in Space.

## LET'S ALL SEND LETTERS ("TEGAMI" IN JAPANESE) OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO KUMETA-SENSEI, WHO DREAMS IN MONOCHROME!

In the March 18th, 1991 issue of Weekly Shounen Jump, there was a message in the sidebar of that week's Dragon Ball chapter which said:

Let's all send “信” (that's “letters” in Chinese) of encouragement to Toriyama-sensei, whose dreams are always in color!

## ALSO NEGI\*\*

Referring to the popular manga, Negima!: Master Negi Magi.

### "SATSUKIBARE ALSO HAPPENS TO TENUOUS THINGS."

When Abiru says this, we see three things: 1) the Yomiuri Giants winning and losing, 2) an art teacher giving the day's subject before bailing, and 3) another one of Nozomu's giant lists! These are all things that get “reversed” in May:

- The double eyelid surgery you got in April wears off in May
- The suction cup you bought at the 100-yen store in April falls off in May
- The conflict between the players and the new coach who arrived in April become public in May (Referring to Tsuneo Horiuchi, who took over as manager for the Yomiuri Giants in 2004. He famously did not get along with his players, but the fighting between him and top-rank hitter Kazuhiro Kiyohara was especially ugly.)
- You got a checkup in April, you get the bad news in May
- The friend you made in April comes over in May and learns you own voice actress CDs
- You sign up for SkyPerfectTV! in April and realize you never watch it in May (SkyPerfectTV! is a satellite television service in Japan.)
- You fall for a girl in April, but it doesn't sink in until May that she has a boyfriend
- You realize in May that the new price package that started in April is screwing you over
- You realize in May that the job you started in April is a pyramid scheme
- You realize in May that the club you joined in April is a cult
- You realize in May that the girl who was nice to you in April was in the paid-date trade
- Bodies sunk in April float to the surface in May (due to gas buildup)



• **The abilities of the volleyball team's "Village Captain" come to light** (This is Koharu Ksumi, who joined the girl band Morning Musume in 2005. Before she got her big break, she was the captain of her school's volleyball team in Washima Village. However, when they asked her to do a volleyball segment on the TV show Hello! Morning, it was revealed that she wasn't actually very good.)

• **Pieces drawn on April 30th are revealed on May 1st** (In May 2007, manga chapters from Weekly Shounen Sunday and Weekly Shounen Magazine that hadn't been published yet were leaked online, via a file sharing service called Winny. Among them was chapter 92 of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei.)

• **The dream you had in April is revealed to be nothing but a dream in May** (April is the start of the school year in Japan. So the new term might have started with big dreams, but after a month or so, those dreams fell flat.)

## **TEACHERS DON'T STEAL UNDERWEAR YOU DROPPED YOUR GLASSES AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME...**

These two bits of chalkboard text are both related to the same story. In January 2008, Takayuki Yamamoto, a 26-year-old elementary school teacher, was arrested for stealing underwear from junior high school boys. He held them at knifepoint and forced them to disrobe. And he might have gotten away with it, but police were able to identify him by the glasses he left behind at the crime scene.

## **"SUCH AS KATA\*\*\*\* SATSUKI'S LACK OF POLITICAL VISION COMING TO LIGHT!"**

Satsuki Katayama is a Liberal Democratic Party member who was elected to the House of Representatives in 2005. She, along with many other first-time winners in that election, came to be known as "Koizumi Children" - in other words, people who were only elected because of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's overwhelming popularity.

## **"ORARI\*\* SATSUKI AND HER HUSBAND "LEADING DIFFERENT LIVES" COMING TO LIGHT!"**

Satsuki Ariga was an announcer with Fuji TV, and she married fellow commentator Kei Wada in 2002. However, they divorced in 2006, and this was the reason they gave for it.

## **"OR MEI AND SATSUKI'S DELUSIONS BEING REVEALED."**

Satsuki and Mei (Get it? "May"?) are two young sisters in Studio Ghibli's classic movie My Neighbor Totoro.

## **MONSTER SURPRISED YOU!**

In the 1981 RPG Wizardry: Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord, when an enemy gets a preemptive strike on your party, the text "The Monster Surprised You!" appears before the fight begins.

## **NEXT TIME I AM A GUND\*\***

This is a poke at Mobile Suit Gundam 00, and its primary protagonist, Setsuna F. Seiei. Setsuna's most well-known line is "I am a Gundam."

## **"YOU'RE FROM AOBA? YOU MUST BE AWESOME!"**

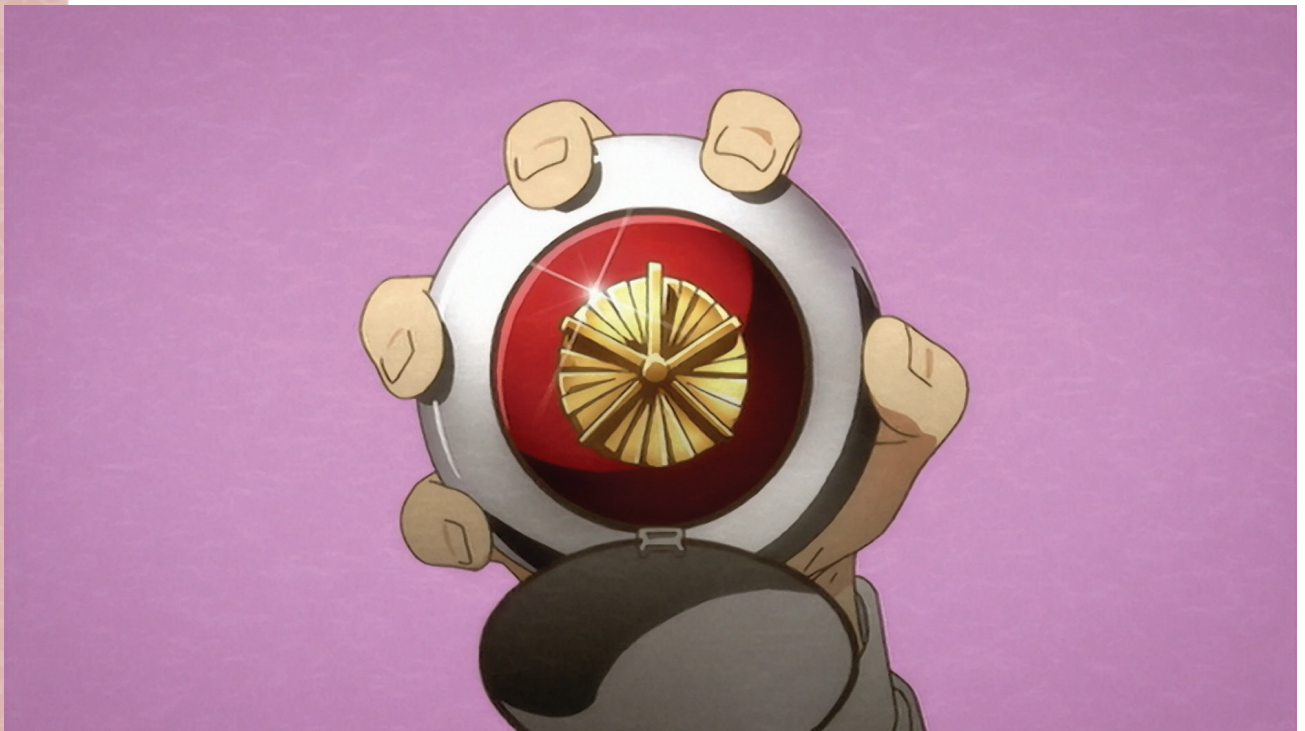
In the 1972 baseball manga *Captain*, the main character, Takeo Taniguchi, transfers to a new school from Aoba Gakuin. Aoba's baseball team is incredibly strong, so everyone thinks Takeo must be a star player! However, that isn't true. Takeo was just a second-stringer, and never played on Aoba's main team.

## **"YOU'RE FROM MUSASHINOMORI? YOU MUST BE AWESOME!"**

Similarly, in the 1998 soccer manga *Whistle*, the main character, Shou Kazamatsuri, transfers to a new school from Musashinomori. Musashinomori's soccer team is incredibly strong, so everyone thinks Shou must be a star player! However, that isn't true. Shou was just a third-stringer, and never played on Musashinomori's main team.

### **SPECIAL ID**

When the police detective shows up, he flashes his badge... sort of. He's flashing the yo-yo from *Sukeban Deka*, a famous 1975 manga about a delinquent high school girl named Saki who becomes an undercover detective. She fights with a steel-loaded yo-yo, which also opens up on the side to reveal her police badge.



### **IMPORTS ARE...**

Japan's food self-sufficiency rate is less than 40%. This means that more than 60% of their food is imported from other countries. What's more, there were many food contamination scares in the 2000s, when this show aired. Many of them have already been mentioned in previous liner notes: mislabeled meat, sweets sold after their expiration dates, poisoned gyoza... But there were even more beyond this: antifreeze in toothpaste, lizards in potato chips, contaminated milk, the list goes on. It's a bad thing when you can't trust your food supply. It seemed like new problems were constantly being revealed.

## **NEXT TIME NAGAI-SENSEI'S "RAINBOWS ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT HAVE EVER LOVED ME!" "SOME!"**

As mentioned in a previous liner note, Nagai-sensei was one of the internet's first big "celebrities" in Japan. This line is from one of his many sessions playing *The Idolmaster*, a game where you play as a producer for a large group of prospective pop idols.



## **YAMAPIKANYAA SIGHTED**

In the comedy series *Azumanga Daioh*, Sakaki owns an Iriomote mountain cat. On the actual island of Iriomote, the cats are called “yamapikarya” - but Sakaki’s friend Osaka twists that into “Pikanyaa”, and uses it as a cutesy name for the cat.

This, then, is just the real species name and Osaka’s cutesy name merged together, into “yamapikanyaa”.

## **I USED TO THINK THAT R25 WAS SOMETHING SO DIRTY I SHOULDN'T LOOK AT IT!**

Japan’s Film Classification and Rating Organization has four rating categories for films.

- **G:** General audiences
- **PG12:** Parental guidance suggested for children under 12
- **R15+:** Restricted to people 15 and over (contains violence, sex, crime, etc.)
- **R18+:** Restricted to people 18 and over (contains extreme violence, sex, crime, etc.)

So if R18 is bad, how much worse is R25? Actually, “R25” was a free newspaper published by the Japanese human resources company Recruit. Though it’s no longer in print, R25 still exists as a website called “New R25”.

## **YOU ARE A LV.2 HYPOCRITE**

In the early 2000s, there was a popular quiz on the Japanese side of the Internet called the “Hypocrite Level Check”. It asked you 20 questions, and then told you your “hypocrite level”. Unfortunately, the website is now defunct.

## **MOROBOSHI HIGH SCHOOL**

And now the school’s name has changed to Moroboshi, another reference to *Denji Sentai Megaranger*. It’s where all five Megarangers go to school.

## **AN OPPO DUMP?!**

Just in case this term hasn’t crossed your path before, an “oppo dump” is when political candidates gather negative information about their opponents, and then release it all to the press. Nozomu isn’t running for office, but the effect here is mostly the same. (The word he uses in Japanese is “kaibunsho”, which is muckraking literature that gets spread around before elections.)

## **TV MANGA [ZOKU.] SAYONARA ZETSUBOU-SENSEI**

“TV Manga” is an old-fashioned way of saying “anime”. However, the team at SHAFT are taking this designation very seriously. If you notice, all through this segment, the only real animation will be on the mouths. Also, the entire thing is presented with a paper-textured background, similar to the 2006 series *Mononoke*.

## IT'S A HOLIDAY, BUT YOU'RE GOING TO SCHOOL?

The autumnal equinox is a national holiday in Japan. Before World War II, it was known as Koureisai, and it was a day to worship past emperors and imperial family members. But after the war, when Emperor Hirohito renounced imperial divinity, the equinox was changed to a non-religious holiday.

## "WOW, IT'S SEPTEMBER ALREADY."

This is a bit of a joke. The previous segment was based on manga chapter 94, which came out in May. And now this segment is based on manga chapter 65, which came out in September. So for the characters in the anime, it's a bit of temporal whiplash.

## I ONLY READ HALF OF (MA)GAZINE. MY ( ) IS AN ADOLESCENT, ( )IJI, AND ( )NAMI-KE OKAWARI...

The Lupin-style text here is almost like a fill-in-the-blank quiz. If we complete the missing parts, we get:

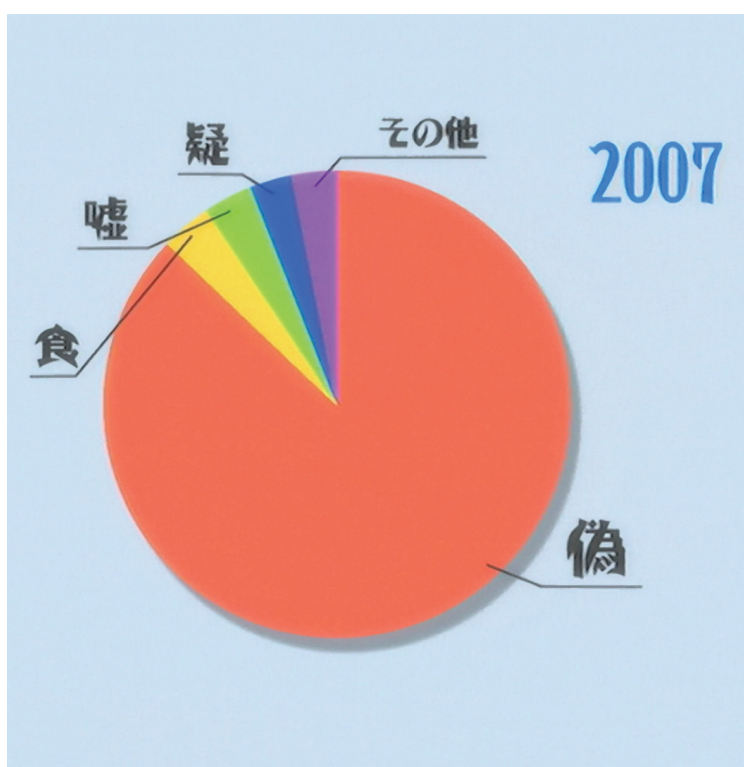
- I only read half of (Ma)gazine
- My (Sister) is an Adolescent
- (Ka)iji
- (Mi)nami-ke Okawari
- I've only read (3) of the books!
- Let's all read (Sayonara, Zetsubou)-sensei!

The three titles referenced here - My Sister is an Adolescent, Kaiji, and Minami-ke Okawari - all ran in Kodansha's Weekly Young Magazine.

## THE CURIOUS CASEBOOK OF INSPECTOR HANBUN

This title is a twist on The Curious Casebook of Inspector Hanshichi, a book of detective stories written by Kidou Okamoto in the early 1900s. For the sake of the pun, the inspector's name has been swapped out with hanbun, which means "half".

## 2007 FAKE, FOOD, LIES, DOUBT, OTHER



Every year, the Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation puts out a survey to pick the top kanji of the year. In 2007, due to the overwhelming amount of food scandals, political greed, and faulty pension records, the winner was 偽, pronounced "nise", which means "fake". (However, it didn't actually win by an 80% landslide. It got 18% of all votes.) Second place was 食 ("food"), third place was 嘘 ("lies"), and fourth place was 疑 ("doubt").



## WE BELIEVED~

If you remember from a previous liner note, American coach Trey Hillman was famous for shouting “Shinjirarenai!” (“Unbelievable!”) in a very thick accent when his team, the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters, won the pennant in 2006.

Well, a year later, when the Nippon-Ham fighters won the Pacific League Championship again in 2007, this time he said “Shinjitemashita!” (“We believed!”)

## “YOU’RE FULL OF DOUBT, SO YOU CAN’T BE “HALF-CONVINCED”!”

Nozomu has a whole list of situations that only inspire doubt...

- **Your wife’s “girls’ weekends”:** Is she really going out with girlfriends? Or is it another guy?
- **I need money for textbooks:** You sure that money’s not going towards something else?
- **Tokyo Sports’ headlines:** Tokyo Sports is a daily sports newspaper that doesn’t exactly strive for accuracy. In an interview, the members of comedy duo Asakusa Kid said that “everything except the date is false”.
- **Bar hostess: “I don’t have a boyfriend”:** Sure thing, lady.
- **Manager Kawabuchi “Oops, I said it...”:** The 2006 World Cup did not go well for Japan. They got knocked out of the tournament without a single win. In a press conference after their crushing defeat, Saburo Kawabuchi, the president of the Japan Football Association, “accidentally” let it slip that they were in discussions with Ivica Osim to take over as coach for the Japan team. However, fans felt like it was just a way to distract from the team’s horrible performance. There were even protests, with around 500 people marching for Kawabuchi to resign.
- **Shinzo Abe “Let’s build a society where you can try again”:** Talk is cheap, and politicians sure do talk a lot.
- **A standing ovation at the Venice Film Festival:** When Studio Ghibli’s Tales from Earthsea was shown at the 63rd Venice International Film Festival, it received a standing ovation. The general public, however, was not so kind.
- **If we can make it through March, we’ll find a silver bullet for our pension problems:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, the Japanese government at first promised that the pension problem would be resolved by the end of March. However, a few months later, they admitted that they’d probably never be able to fully restore all the missing pension data.

## OLD-STYLE EDUCATION

This refers to a time when physical punishment was allowed in schools.

## RELAXED EDUCATION

And this refers to the Yutori Education Policy (“yutori” means “relaxed”), mentioned in a previous liner note.

The term “Yutori Education” can also be used as a mocking “explanation” for people who lack common sense.

## KAPPA FOUND (?) TOKYO SPORTS EDUCATION

As mentioned in an earlier liner note, Tokyo Sports wasn't exactly a bastion of truth. In October 2002, they ran the front-page headline "Kappa Found in Toono City!" But of course, it was just someone dressed in a costume. They were filming for a reality TV show called Slightly Better Denpa Shounen: The Last Crusade.

## "THOSE SEMI-SEALED WATER HEATERS WERE ACTUALLY COMPLETELY SEALED, WHICH LED TO ACCIDENTS!"

Water heaters need ventilation, so that the carbon monoxide they produce can be properly removed. That's what Nozomu is talking about when he says "semi-sealed". However, if the water heater is "completely sealed" - in other words, if it isn't venting properly - the poisonous carbon monoxide can leak into the user's house instead. In 2007, Matsushita revealed that, between 1986 and 2006, 48 people had died due to carbon monoxide poisoning from their water heaters.

## HOW PERFECTLY ORDINARY.

The phrase "perfectly \_\_\_\_" ("nantoii \_\_\_\_") gained popularity in the 2000s, thanks to 2-chan users. 2-chan threads were often full of awful things, but a "good thread" contained things that were wholesome. Thus people would post "What a perfectly good thread" ("Nantoii ii sure") in threads that earned their approval.

## LEAVE THE CONSERVATIVE REBIRTH TO ME!

In 2008, the magazine "Shokun!" ("Gentlemen!") featured a New Year's Special interview with then-Prime Minister Tarou Asou. "Leave the conservative rebirth to me!" was the article's title.

## LIVE

This simple imperative was the tagline for Studio Ghibli's 1997 hit Princess Mononoke.

## MORE SHIORI?



When this text appears, we see Chiri in a blue and yellow school uniform. She's dressed up like Shiori Fujisaki, the childhood friend in Konami's dating sim series Tokimeki Memorial.

The "more" ("motto") comes from the opening theme to the very first Tokimeki Memorial game on the PC Engine, a song called "Motto! Motto! Tokimeki" by Mami Kingetsu.



## WHAT'S HARUMI READING NOW?

Harumi is reading a doujinshi labeled "Ath/Cag". This means it's about Athrun Zala and Cagalli Yula Athha from Mobile Suit Gundam SEED.

## "HALF" THINGS ARE ENTIRELY A LIE!

This time, it's Chiri who brings up a big list of examples!

- **Comedy duo pay:** Ideally, both members of a comedy duo would get equal pay. But that's not always how it works out.
- **Mt. Fuji's 5th Station:** Climbers who hike up Mt. Fuji will pass through 10 different stations along the way. But each of the four climbing routes start from their 5th station. In other words, the 5th station might sound like the halfway point, but it's actually just the beginning.
- **Public/private partnerships that are mostly public:** This is a type of company in Japan known as "hankanhanmin" ("half-government, half-public"). They're companies that are jointly owned and operated by both the government and the private sector. However, when it comes to how these companies run on a day-to-day basis - low profitability, lots of red tape - they are very much government-style affairs.
- **An old man reflecting on his latter days on his deathbed:** Perhaps the second half wasn't as exciting as the first.
- **Insurance adjusters saying a building is half destroyed when only the frame is left:** Generally speaking, a building is "half-destroyed" in insurance terms when more than 20% of the structure is damaged or lost. If more than 70% of it is gone, it's considered "completely destroyed". So in this case, the insurance company should give the larger payout for a completely destroyed building. However, in 2005, the Japanese insurance industry was rocked by scandal after scandal over unpaid claims. Over the next three years, Japan's Financial Services Agency found over 50 separate insurance companies that were illegally denying proper payouts to their customers.
- **"Semi-cohabitating" couples, which is harder than just living together:** Having half a relationship ends up causing twice the problems.
- **The Dragon Lord proclaiming "I will grant thee dominion over half this world!":** At the end of the very first Dragon Quest game (Dragon Warrior in the US), when you finally face off against the evil Dragon Lord, he gives you the option to join him, and offers to let you rule over half the world. But if you agree, the Dragon Lord laughs, tells you to take a "long, long rest", and then the screen goes black as though you've died... Seems like you might not get to enjoy your share of the spoils.
- **Buffer\*n is made of 50% gentleness:** The censored word is "Bufferin" - a brand of aspirin coated with antacid - and the line about "50% gentleness" is from slogans for the medicine in Japan. However, though Bufferin might be easy on the stomach, you won't find "gentleness" anywhere in the ingredients list.
- **Manga artists who say they're half done when they've only got three pages finished:** Lying to your editor won't solve anything, you know?
- **It's half over:** Season 2 is "half over", but the halfway point of this 13-episode cour was technically last episode.



## HARD WORK



When Chiri single-handedly rebuilds the old couple's home, she's wearing a yellow hard hat with "Alps Industries" written on it. It's a reference to famous comedian Beat Takeshi, who used to play an Alps Industries construction worker on the 80s comedy show *Oretachi Hyoukin-zoku* ("We're the Funny Tribe").

### "AS YOU CAN SEE, MY CRITERIA FOR "HALF" ARE OF UNMATCHED ACCURACY!"

Chiri's second big list is mostly self-explanatory, but there are a couple that could use some clarification:

- **Half affair:** Coffee together at Renoir: Café Renoir is part of a chain of upscale coffee shops in Japan. The décor is immaculate and slightly old-fashioned, so if you're meeting someone here for coffee, it might be a little bit serious.
- **Half prostitution:** "Personal service" at a maid café: In 2005, the popularity of maid cafés was rising, and they started opening in locations beyond Akihabara. However, the first two that opened on the southern island of Kyushu ran into a bit of trouble. Authorities heard reports of "VIP service" and girls sitting with customers and "responding to requests", and were instantly on their guard. They advised the cafés to apply for special licenses, in order to avoid violating adult entertainment laws.
- **Half porno:** Shimokita Glory Days: This is the title of a live-action comedy series that aired in 2006. It wasn't technically pornography, but the show featured sexual situations and starred a cavalcade of porn stars, so...
- **Half Saitama:** Kita-ku: Saitama is a city just north of Tokyo. If you were to start from Tokyo and head towards Saitama, when you reach Kita-ku (a ward in northern Tokyo), you're halfway there.
- **Half glitzy:** Futako Shinchi: Futako Shinchi isn't a person - it's a train station in Kawasaki.



It's a fairly normal train station; but it's also close to Futako-Tamagawa, a fairly ritzy part of town.

- **Half Roppongi Hills:** Nakano Broadway: You might remember from a previous liner note that Roppongi Hills is a fancy development project featuring shops, restaurants, movie theaters and apartments, all in a very expensive location that caters to the rich and famous. But while Roppongi Hills opened in 2003, Nakano Broadway was built back in 1966. Like Roppongi Hills, Nakano Broadway featured shops, restaurants, and apartments, but over the years, Nakano lost its luster as a luxury location. Instead, since the secondhand manga store Mandarake had opened in Nakano Broadway in the 1980s, the site slowly turned into a major destination for otaku and anime-loving tourists.

- **Half ended:** Manga is run in the back: As mentioned in a previous liner note, big manga anthologies like Weekly Shounen Jump run their stories in descending order of popularity. So if you're at the front of the magazine, you're golden! If you're towards the back, you might want to start thinking about your next project.

## **"WE'RE... HALF DONE."**

The word Nozomu uses here is "han-ochi". "Han" means "half", and it's true that "ochi" can mean "done". However, "ochi" can also mean "confession", and Han-ochi ("Half a Confession") is the name of a 2002 novel by Hideo Yokoyama. It was the story of a police officer who confesses to killing his wife, and it was popular enough to be made into a TV series and an award-winning movie.

## **WHEN YOU HEAR KAFUKA, YOU THINK "TRANSFORMATION"**

Kafuka's name is a play on the absurdist author Franz Kafka, whose most famous work is a novella called *The Metamorphosis*. It's about a salesman named Gregor Samsa who transforms into a huge insect. Hmm, I wonder what Kafuka has transformed into?

## **DENKA WESTERN APPAREL**

DJ DENKA is a DJ with the Japanese hip-hop group LUNCH TIME SPEAX. In February 2008, he was arrested for violently assaulting the owner of a clothing store by punching him in the face more than 10 times.

## **LIFE DREAMS HOPE**

Kafuka's name might be a play on Franz Kafka, but it's also quite close to "Kefka", the villain from *Final Fantasy VI*. Right as the final battle begins, he says this famous line: "Life... Dreams... Hope... Where do they come from? And where do they go...? Such meaningless things... I'll destroy them all!"

## **24 HITOMIS**

This next episode preview is a play on *Twenty-Four Eyes*, a 1952 novel by Sakae Tsuboi. The original novel is about a first-grade teacher with a class of twelve students (thus twenty-four eyes). This parody version, however, is about a teacher with a class full of real-life singers and actresses who are all named Hitomi. (Hitomi is a first name, but it can also mean "eye".)

# EPISODE 9

## ZETSUBOU FIGHT



These little shorts are a parody of Ultra Fight, a short-lived TV series that ran in 1970. The studio behind Ultraman was looking for a quick way to make a show on a low budget, so they took fight scenes from Ultraman and Ultraseven, trimmed them down into 5-minute episodes, and had sports announcer Jiro Yamada narrate what was happening on screen. The result was very similar to what you see here in Zetsubou-sensei.

### THE ZETSUBOU TABLE-TURNING TACTIC!

This “episode” is a play on Ultra Fight episode 79, “The Terrifying Table-Turning Tactic!”. Maria is playing the part of Woo (although her fur is green instead of Woo’s white), Kaere is Telesdon, and Nozomu is the heroic Ultraseven.

### “THIS BATTLE IS EVENLY MATCHED.”

The joke here is that matches in Ultra Fight were always described as being utterly one-sided.

### OBSERVATIONS REGARDING INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES

The Lupin-style text here is defining the term “heiwaboke”. It literally means “peace idiot”, and it’s used as a derogatory term to describe people who have lived in peace for so long, that they lose the ability to recognize and defend themselves from outside threats.

### AS THEY SAY, IT’S BETTER TO BE A COUPLE THAN A SINGLE

This title is a line from a short story by Oda Sakunosuke, called Meoto Zenzai (“Hurray for Marriage!”).



## NAKANO CRAM SCHOOL

Nakano was the name of a military center that the Japanese army used for espionage training during World War II. It was a small school, with only about 2500 graduates over the entirety of its operation. Students were taught things like sabotage, covert operations, foreign languages, and guerrilla warfare.

As for the “Cram School” part, Nakano Cram School is a gag manga from 1985. It centered on a prep school meant to improve the quality of students at the Nakano military training facility.

## NYAN!

The cute little cat with a topknot is Nyanmage, the mascot of a Japanese cultural theme park called Edo Wonderland. His name is a combination of “nyan” (the sound of a cat meowing) and “chonmage”, a topknot hairstyle most commonly associated with samurai and the Edo period.



## "I CAN SEE TIME ITSELF."

As Nozomu is struck down and floating towards the afterlife, he says that he “can see time itself.” This is a callback to Lalah Sune from the original Mobile Suit Gundam, and her last words to Amuro towards the end of the series.

## "ANYONE WHO IS NEW YEAR'S STUPOR-ING, I GIVE THEM A NEW YEAR'S STRIKING!"

Maria's pose here, with her middle and ring fingers bent down on each hand, is a nod to Sailor Moon. Sailor Moon herself would often strike a similar pose after her transformation sequence.



**"COME BACK HERE!"**



When Maria jumps out of the window, she suddenly looks like she's falling into a dark cityscape - then she smiles eerily and disappears. This is a reference to a famous scene from the 1995 film *Ghost in the Shell*, where Major Motoko Kusanagi jumps off a building, shoots a man through a window, and then smiles and disappears while the police watch her fall.

**"KIIIN! UHOHOI!"**

This is from the comedy manga *Dr. Slump*. The main character, a purple-haired robot girl named Arale, says these nonsensical phrases, and also runs with her arms spread out backwards, just like Maria is doing here.

### **SHINING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS**

Japanese publisher Shogakukan has a magazine called "Shougaku Ichinensei" ("First Year of Grade School"). As the name suggests, it's meant for children in first grade. From 1980 through 1994, Shogakukan promoted the magazine with a series of commercials called "Pikapika Ichinensei" ("Shining First Year Students"), where first graders were put in front of a camera and given free rein to say adorable, ridiculous things. The commercials turned out to be incredibly popular - so much so that the company revived the campaign in 2019.

**"IF YOU CHECK MORE THAN THREE OF THESE, YOU HAVE NEW YEAR'S STUPOR!"**

As usual, here are the entries in Nozomu's list that could use a little extra explanation:

- **You've eaten curry rice even though you had leftover crab:** Since many people don't want to go through the trouble of cooking over the New Year's holiday, companies make sure to air a lot of TV commercials for easy-to-prepare food, such as ready-made curry.



• **You've paid the reception fee out of guilt because you watched Kohaku Gassen:** NHK's annual New Year's music program, Kouhaku Uta Gassen, has been mentioned in a previous liner note. But as for the "reception fee", if you own a TV set in Japan, you are technically required to pay an annual TV license to NHK, the Japanese public broadcasting organization. Every year, someone will come to your door to collect the fee, usually around \$100-\$200. And though it's technically illegal, many people often dodge the NHK collection man, or lie to him about needing to pay the fee.

• **You've bought stuff you don't need at Auto\*\*cs (like a wide rearview mirror):** The censored word is meant to be Autobacs, a Japanese auto parts store similar to Autozone.

• **You've used your spare Print Gocco lights:** Print Gocco was a compact color screen-printing system that released in the late 70s. First, the user would make a small, postcard-sized image that they wanted to copy. Then, the image would be put on the base of a hinged plastic frame, sort of like putting paper onto a modern-day scanner bed. Then the image would be covered with a proprietary film screen containing a thin layer of thermoplastic, and the lid would be closed over it. The lid contained a battery-powered lightbox with pricey single-use flashbulbs that, when lit, would cause the thermoplastic in the screen to melt over any part of the original image that was dark. This turned the screen into a stencil that could be covered with ink and used to make copies. Print Gocco was incredibly successful in Japan for several decades. It was eventually discontinued in 2005, but due to fan demand, it went on sale for one more year in 2007.

• **You've bought a Whiteband because you wanted to do a good deed:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, Whiteband was supposed to be a charity, but ended up more like a scam.

• **You've felt admiration for Hikomaro:** Hikomaro is a celebrity food critic. He doesn't have any sort of culinary background; he's just a big guy who has a distinct way of speaking, and likes to talk about eating.

• **You've been genuinely worried about Yada A\*\*ko:** The censored name is meant to be Akiko Yada, an actress who was a rising star in the early 2000s. In 2006, she married a man named Manabu Oshio. Manabu was a free spirit and a playboy, so people were concerned that the relationship wouldn't last. And in 2009 (long after this episode was made), they did indeed get divorced... after he was arrested and convicted of taking ecstasy, as well as giving it to a hostess girl who ended up dying from the drug.

## CHECK THE TIME

When Chiri points out a man who has jet lag, the image turns to black and white, and a distinct ticking sound can be heard while Maria chooses her next course of action. This is another homage to the American crime drama 24. A digital countdown clock making this exact sound was a foundational part of that show.

## "TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, GO READ HAMANAKA AI."

College Girl Tutor Hamanaka Ai is an ecchi gag manga that also ran in Weekly Shounen Magazine around the same time as Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. So basically, Nozomu is telling readers to skip over to that series if they're looking for more dirty jokes.

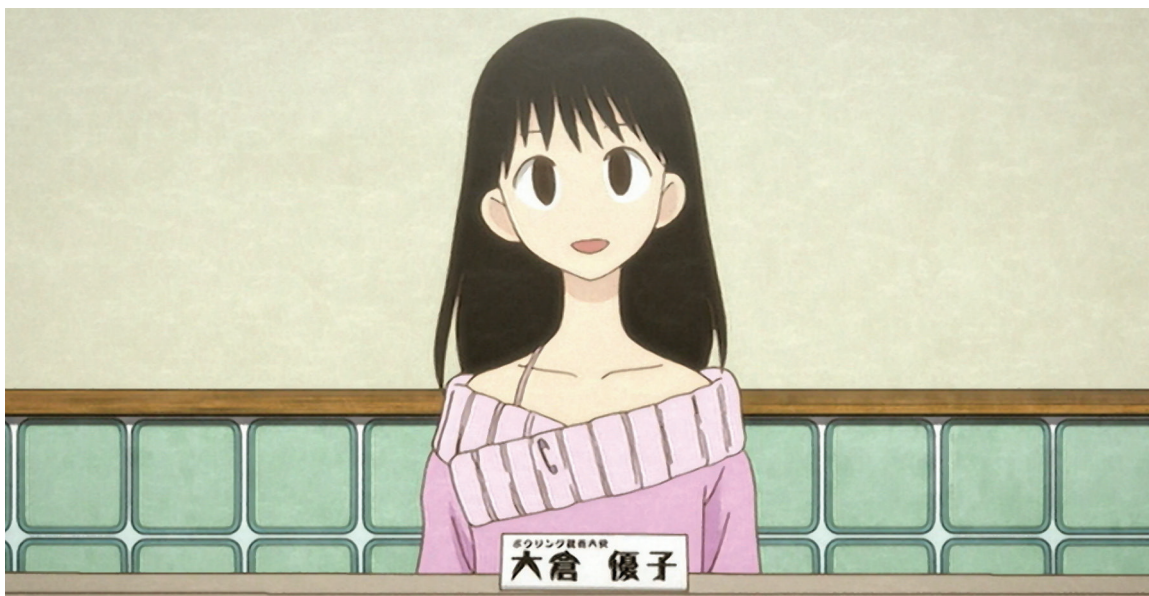
## TV TEIKYO

This is a poke at real-life TV station TV Tokyo. "Teikyo" means "capital", so it's technically still correct...!

## BOWLING GOODWILL AMBASSADOR OOGURA YUKO

If you remember from previous liner notes, Yuko Ogura is the pinup girl who claims to be from the planet Korin. Prior to her marriage in 2011, she usually presented herself as a cute, innocent school-girl. Her real name is written 小倉 優子; the first kanji in her last name is the kanji for “small” (小). But here in Zetsubou-sensei, the first kanji in her last name has been changed to the kanji for “big”: 大倉 優子.

As to why she’s a “Bowling Goodwill Ambassador”, Yuko had a starring role in the 2003 movie Cutie Girl: Bowler Girls in Crisis. Not only that, but she’s also a bowling fan in her own private life, and has even signed memorabilia for the Japan Bowling Museum in Tokyo.



## POLITICAL BACKING



When Maria confronts the prime minister, we can see four people behind her: Koga, Tanigaki, Fukuda, and Kono. These are all politicians with the Liberal Democratic Party: Makoto Koga, Sadakazu Tanigaki, Yasuo Fukuda, and Youhei Kono.



This was potentially confusing to viewers at the time, because when this episode aired in 2008, Yasuo Fukuda (the man in the lower left) was the current prime minister. So who is she talking to?

The answer is: Junichiro Koizumi. He was prime minister when the manga version of this story was published, in January of 2006.

### **"EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF OUR TERRITORIES BY OTHER COUNTRIES!"**

This is a reference to the Liancourt Rocks dispute. It's a territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea over who actually owns a small group of islets in the Sea of Japan. Korea calls them Dokdo, Japan calls them Takeshima, and over the past 100 years, the two countries have made little to no progress in sorting out who actually owns them.

### **"THE KYUSHU OFFSHORE GAS FIELD ISSUE!"**

And this refers to a dispute between China and Japan over contested territory in the East China Sea. In 2003, Chinese oil companies started offshore drilling just 5km away from Japan's side of the currently-accepted border. The Japanese government was suspicious of this, so they sent a seismic survey ship to investigate. In return, China sent naval vessels to harass the ship, and even stationed two destroyers in the area.

### **"WHEN YOU RIDE A SEGWAY, THE VEHICLE OF THE FUTURE, YOU LOOK LIKE NONE OTHER THAN DR. \*\*SHIRITO!"**

The censored name is "Dr. Mashirito", the evil scientist with big hair from Akira Toriyama's Dr. Slump. If you squint, he and Junichiro Koizumi kind of look alike... sort of...

And about the Segway, then-US President George W. Bush gave Junichiro Koizumi a Segway scooter as a gift back in 2005. Many PR photos and videos were taken.

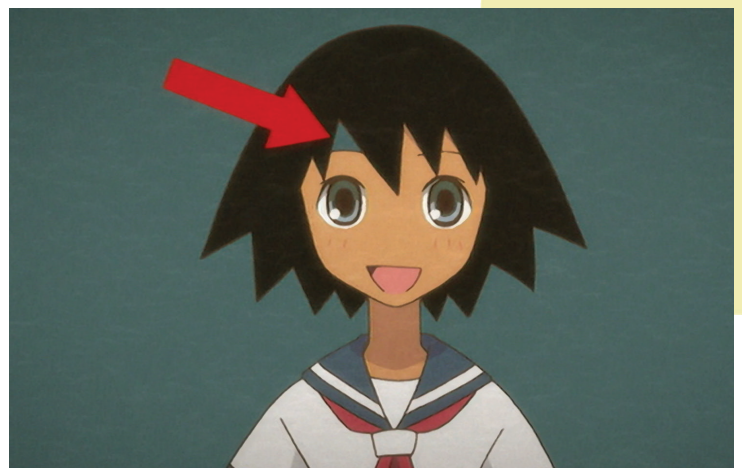
### **"EXPLAIN TO THE MAN WHO LOOKS LIKE NAKANO-SAN WHY YOU LOOK LIKE DR. \*\*SHIRITO!"**

"Nakano-san" is Kazuo Nakano, a character in the gag manga Kinnikuman. He's a short, middle-aged man who wears a suit and a wig. It's hard to say who Maria thinks resembles him, but among the four men behind her, Yasuo Fukuda is probably the closest fit.

### **"THIS WAS DELIBERATE! IT ALSO IN MANGA!"**

Maria is referring to two different mistakes. The first is a coloring mistake, where an area of her forehead above her eyebrow isn't filled in properly. And the second is that she's wearing a scarf with her school uniform - the other girls wear one, but she doesn't. (Perhaps it's "excessive decoration"...)

The coloring mistake especially will be (and already has been!) something of a running gag with her character. If you keep an eye out, you'll see the "mistake" appear in several different episodes.



## THE ZETSUBOU GEBAGEBA ZONE!

This “Zetsubou Fight” episode is based on episode 131 of Ultra Fight, “The Kai-ju Gebageba Zone”. Kafuka is playing an Alien Icarus, Meru is Eleking, Abiru is Keronia, Nami is an Alien Godola, Matoi is Keylla, and Chiri is an Alien Guts. As for the mammoth, with its one broken tusk (and one broken horn), it seems to be a distant relative to Katakibaore, the woolly mammoth from the 1966 manga about cavemen, Gon, The Stone-Age Boy.

## ZETSUBOU LOVES PUNCHES!

And this episode is based on episode 137 of Ultra Fight, “Icarians Love Punches”. Harumi appears with a big flower on her head, just like Gon’s girlfriend Piko-chan from Gon, The Stone-Age Boy.

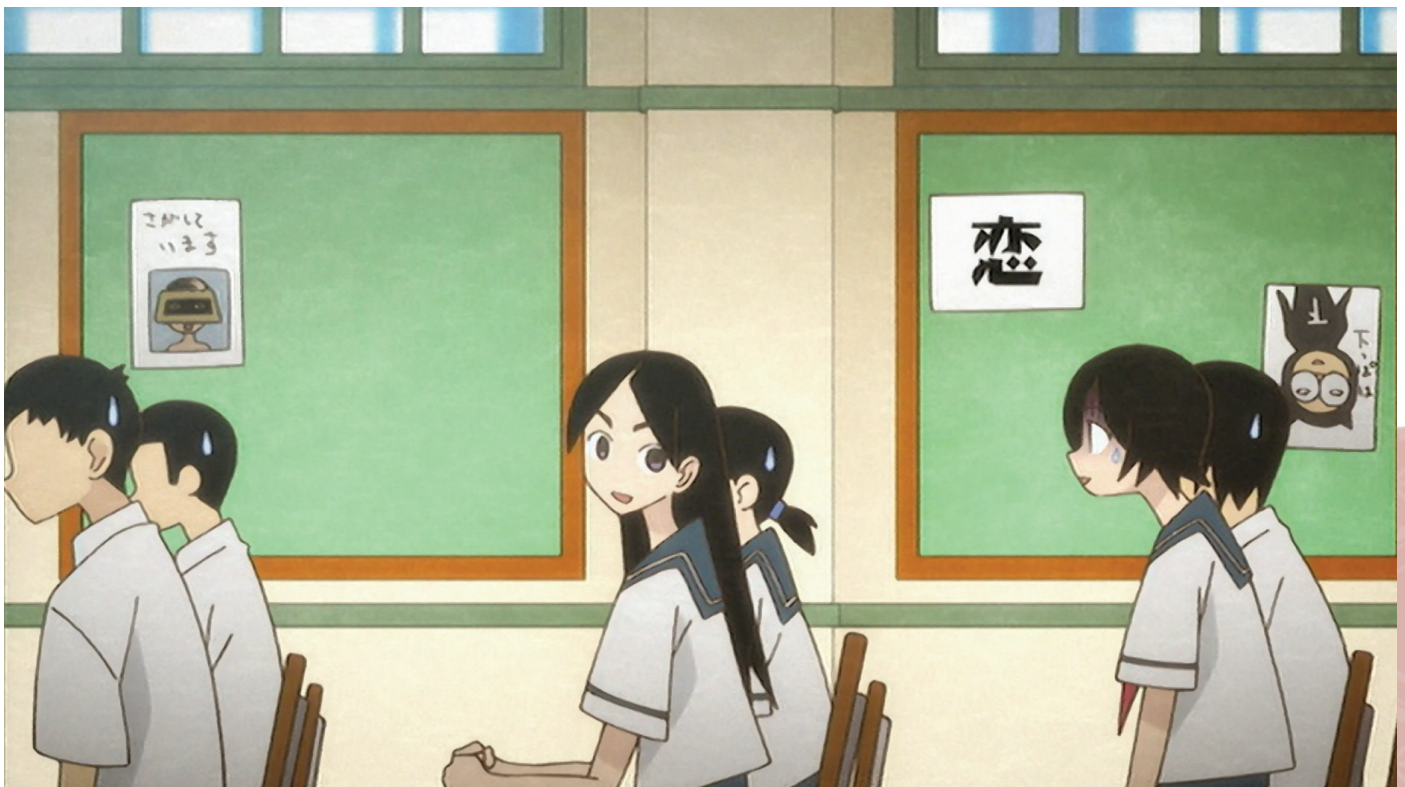
## A LEAF TOSSED ABOUT ON THE CURRENTS

This Lupin-style text is a line from a book called A Mercenary’s Pride by Masaki Takabe: “A leaf tossed about on the brutal currents of combat; that is the true nature of the mercenary on the battlefield.” The book is Masaki’s autobiographical experiences as a Japanese mercenary-for-hire.

## THE SECRET PASSAGE TO THE INTERIOR

The title for this part is a parody of a poem by Basho. It’s called “The Narrow Road to the Interior”.

## SEARCHING FOR AN UNDERLING



This message has been split up across two posters. The left poster shows the former Tarou Sekiutsu, and the poster on the right is a picture of Chitan Tsubouchi from Katte ni Kaizou, dressed in his underling suit.



## **"IN THE END, SURPRISE INSPECTIONS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM RARELY TURN UP ANYTHING MORE THAN THIS!"**

Among Nozomu's collection of confiscations, there's a beer can that says "Shipporo Asasho\*\*\*\*". This is meant to be "Sapporo Asashoryuu". Sapporo is a Japanese beer manufacturer, and Asashoryuu is the name of a sumo wrestler who was dominating the sport in 2007, but got caught faking an injury and ended up suspended for two tournaments in a row.

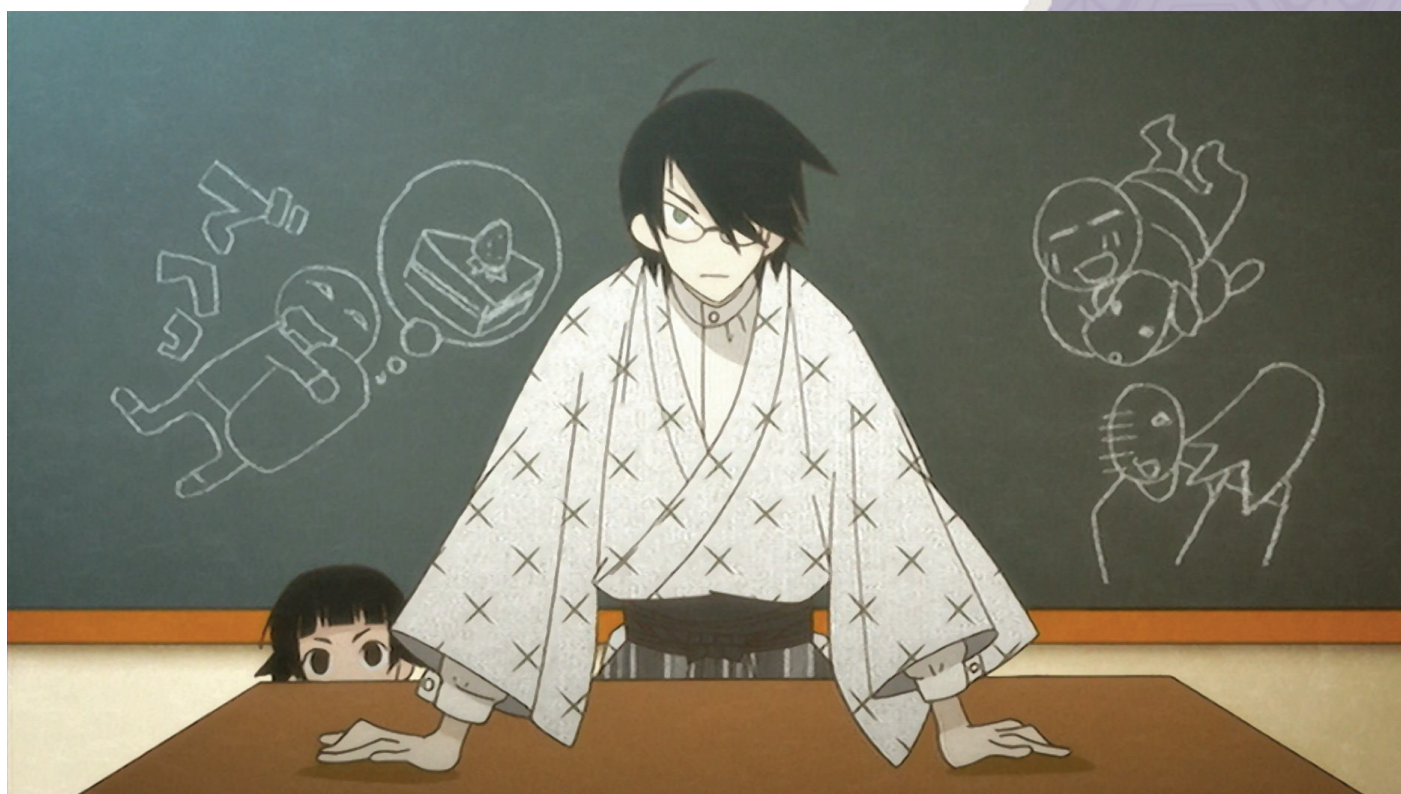
The pack of cigarettes is meant to say "Lucky Strike", although the packaging looks closer to something from Lucky Star.

And the mirror is a reference to Kazuhide Uekusa. If you remember from a previous liner note, he used to be an economist and professor at Waseda University, until he was caught using a mirror to peep up a high school girl's skirt in 2004.

## **THAT'S PLENTY BAD, YOU MORON**

Speaking of Lucky Star, four of the students in this shot are from that series. The girl with long purple hair is Kagami, the girl with short purple hair is Tsukasa, the brown-haired boy in the middle is Shiraishi, and the girl behind him with blue hair is Konata.

## **"INSPECTIONS MUST BE CONDUCTED WHEN THE SUBJECT IS TRULY OFF GUARD!"**



As Nozomu says this, there are pictures on the blackboard behind him. These pictures were also in the original manga, and they came with descriptions: the far left picture is "When you're dreaming of cake", the upper right is "When you're roughhousing with your dog", and the bottom right is "When you walk past a beautiful woman".

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THIS CLASSROOM?

This is referring to Nozomu's old friend. When all the pictures of students appeared in the previous shot, he was there too, in the small frame on the bottom left.

### "YODELAYHEEHOO!"

Maria comes flying towards the screen on an impossibly long swing, with picturesque snow-capped mountains in the background. This is a parody of the opening to *Heidi, Girl of the Alps*, an incredibly popular anime version of the Heidi story that aired in 1974. However, while Heidi was swinging in front of the Alps, Maria is swinging in front of the Japanese Alps, a set of mountain ranges that divide the main island of Honshu.

### JAKUNIKU PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL

Today's high school name comes from Honoo no Tenkousei ("Blazing Transfer Student"), a 1983 manga about a school where all arguments are settled through fighting. (You might recall from a previous liner note that "jakuniku" means "survival of the fittest"!)

### STRANGE STUDENTS

On Chiri's billboard of "inspection results", there are a couple photographs mixed in that might not belong there. Especially the pictures of Chitan Tsubouchi from *Katte ni Kaizou*, and the children's anime superhero Anpanman.

### WHAT'S HARUMI READING NOW?

Harumi got caught reading a doujinshi titled "This is Summer". In Japanese, it's *Koko Natsu* (此处夏), which literally means "this place is summer". But it also doubles as the names Coco and Nuts, two characters from the children's anime series *Yes! Precure 5*. They're the duo on the cover.

### 11 SECONDS OF SILENCE BEFORE ANSWERING

In July 2007, Japan's Liberal Democratic Party lost control of the house for the first time in 52 years. So, in an attempt to renew support for his faltering party, Shinzo Abe - at that time, the Prime Minister and leader of the LDP - announced that he would be assembling a new cabinet. For the most part, he refrained from discussing the reorganization. However, when reporters asked who the Secretary General would be, Abe paused 11 full seconds before answering: it would be Tarou Asou, one of his closest allies.

### TAGGED OUT USING THE HIDDEN BALL TRICK

On August 15th, 2007, there was a baseball game between the Hiroshima Toyo Carp and the Yomiuri Giants. The two teams were tied in the seventh inning, with the Giants up to bat. The Carp's pitcher was getting ready to throw a pitch, when all of a sudden, the Carp's second baseman ran up and touched the Giants player who was on second base, and the player was out. All of the Giants players were visibly confused - why was he out? It turns out that the Carp players had used the hidden ball trick. It's a legal play where a player on defense pretends to throw the ball back to the pitcher, but actually keeps the ball hidden in his glove, so that he can easily tag a runner out.



## DOPING WITH HAIR TONIC

Rick Guttormson is an American who played for the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks starting in March 2007. However, in August of that same year, he also became the first player in Japanese baseball history to fail a drug test. He tested positive for Finasteride, which is banned because it can mask the presence of drugs in a urine sample. But he wasn't doing anything illegal - it turned out the Finasteride was coming from a hair-growing agent that he'd been using. In the end, he was suspended for 20 days, and his team was fined \$63,000.

(In the picture, "Ikumo" is written on the bottle. It's a play on Ikumou, a real-life hair loss treatment brand in Japan.)

## GOLF BETTING EXPOSED

If you recall from a previous liner note, Yoshiro Yokomine is a politician who was popular for a while, thanks to his young pro-golfing daughter. But public opinion on him soured when he was accused of betting on his own golf games.

## "THEY'RE TOO OFF GUARD!"

Many of the items in Chiri's list are self-explanatory, but here are the ones that might need a word or two:

- **Accidentally printing too many:** This is most likely referring to printing doujinshi for Comiket. However, it could also be all those copies of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei being given away in Lucky Bags in episode 5...

- **Carelessly posting something to your blog and revealing it's being made into a drama:** In March 2007, actress Ai Tanimoto posted on her blog that she was going to be in a live-action Negima! adaptation. Only problem was, the show hadn't been announced yet. Her blog post was removed, but the damage was already done.

- **Forgetting the water is supposed to be hot:** Comedian Yoshio Kojima (remember him from a previous liner note?) was on a show called 24-Hour Television, doing a Hot Water Commercial (remember those from a previous liner note?). However, when he came on stage, he was busy trading slapstick jokes with another comedian. As part of a joke, Yoshio jumped into the water tank and started dancing around, splashing the audience. Everyone on set had to frantically remind him, "You're standing in hot water!" at which point he quickly jumped out. It's possible that he was ignoring the heat as part of his foolish antics... but it's much more likely that he just gave away the secret that the water in a Hot Water Commercial isn't hot at all.

- **Buying a ticket even though you have a SUICA card:** SUICA Cards are prepaid fare cards that can be used for trains, buses, and subways. If you already have one, you don't need to buy a ticket.

- **Forgetting the bento you have warming up at the mini mart:** When you buy a bento at a convenience store in Japan, the cashier will ask if you want it to be warmed up. If you say yes, they'll heat it up in a microwave near the counter. Just don't forget to pick it before you go...

- **Carelessly admitting to something results in history being twisted:** In 1993, then-Chief Cabinet Secretary Youhei Kouno revealed the results of a government study on comfort wom-

en, which concluded that the Japanese Imperial Army had indeed forced women to work in military-run brothels during World War II. (Prior to this, the government had denied that the women were coerced.) The reaction to Kouno's statement was, of course, divided. Some people saw it as a positive step towards repairing international relations. Others saw it as a hasty conclusion that would only give diplomatic ammunition to Japan's enemies.

## **"IF YOU'RE A DOJIKKO, YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING!"**

Now it's Kafuka's turn to give us a list!

- **A dojikko gets hurt, but plays soccer back in his home**

**country:** After winning his 21st title in July 2007, sumo wrestler Asashouryuu skipped the following regional tour in August. He told the Sumo Association that he had injuries to his left elbow and a stress fracture in his lower back which would take six weeks to heal. However, he was then spotted on television playing a charity soccer match in Mongolia. The media firestorm was intense, and Asashouryuu was suspended for the next two tournaments.

- **A dojikko gets caught in a honey trap:** Honey traps might seem like a ridiculous concept, but they do exist. One of the most infamous examples was a Japanese diplomat in Shanghai who had an affair with a woman who, unbeknownst to him, was being coerced by the Chinese government. He was then blackmailed into revealing state secrets. Sadly, he ended up committing suicide in 2004.

- **A dojikko loses pension data:** This is referring to the great pension data scandal of 2007, mentioned in previous liner notes.

- **A dojikko leaves kids in the car:** Leaving children in cars is a tragedy that happens in every country, and Japan is no exception. The closest incident to when this story aired would have been the death of a two-year-old boy in July 2007. The workers at his nursery school drove the children to a nearby park, but once they got there, they didn't do a headcount, and didn't realize that one of the kids had been left in the van. The two-year-old ended up dying of heat stroke, and the workers were convicted of professional negligence.

- **A dojikko labels Chinese-made goods as Japanese-made:** With all the scandals surrounding Chinese food imports (several of which have been mentioned in previous liner notes), many Japanese companies took to labelling their products as "domestic", even though they contained raw ingredients imported from China. Because of this, Japan's Food Labeling Laws were revised in 2017, so that if an item includes ingredients from multiple areas, the ingredients' countries of origin must be displayed in order of amount that is used to create the product.

- **A dojikko next door mistakes our territory for theirs:** This is another reference to the Liancourt Rocks dispute, mentioned in a previous liner note.



**"THIS GOES WAY BEYOND DOJIKKO TERRITORY!"**



As Nozomu makes his escape to Shibuya, there are all sorts of cultural artifacts in the background. The Egyptian pyramids, the Thinker, the Arc de Triomphe... But if you look up, you can also see the legendary floating city Laputa from *Castle in the Sky*.

## **BLAH BLAH BLAH BRAS!**

This is a reference to the liner notes in chapter 21 of Nobuhiro Watsuki's manga *Buso Renkin*. He said that he was originally going to make the character Captain Bravo shout "bra-bra-bra-bra!" when he unleashed a flurry of punches, similar to Kenshiro from *Fist of the North Star*. But the end he nixed the idea, thinking it was a bit too much.

## **SIGNS IN THE CITY**

Right as Chiri is getting ready to pounce, we're shown a city street with several signs.

- **Bargo:** This is a play on PARCO, a department store chain in Japan that specializes in popular fashion and youth culture.
- **Digital TV July 11th:** This is another reference to the analog-to-digital TV swapover that was happening in Japan around this time. See previous liner notes for details.
- **Shibuya Udagawa:** The sign is partially blocked by Chiri's head, but in full, it says "Shibuya Udagawachou". Udagawachou is a district of Shibuya.
- **Looking for a Shibuya Ondo CD:** This is a real song, written in 1978. It was officially recognized by Shibuya's local government as a song for residents of Shibuya, and it came complete with a traditional dance. It's often performed at festivals.

• **I'm born! At the climax:** If you read season 1's liner notes, you might remember that the character Momotaros from Kamen Rider Den-O had many popular catchphrases. One of them was, "I'm here!" ("Ore sanjou!") Well, in 2007, a Kamen Rider Den-O movie was made, with the subtitle "I'm born!" ("Ore tanjou!"). As for "at the climax", that's another one of Momotaros' catchphrases. The full phrase is, "From start to finish, I'm at the climax!" which he says whenever he's ready to fight.

• **Heathen:** In the original manga version of this story, Chiri is holding a piece of paper with someone's picture on it, marked "heathen". Presumably, it's the person she was supposed to stab (and then she hits Nozomu instead). However, something must've gotten lost between the manga and the anime studio, because it's mistakenly shown here as a poster on the wall in the background.

## **AT THE ENDS OF DESPAIR**

This is a play on Ultra Fight episode 153, "At the End of the World".

## **"JUST THEN, A CERTAIN FAMOUS, MYSTERIOUS STONE APPEARS."**

The "mysterious stone" is, of course, a parody of the Monoliths from the 1968 novel/movie classic 2001: A Space Odyssey.

## **FIRST WORDS**

When Nozomu is granted the power of speech, he has a lot to say:

• **I alone am to be revered on heaven and earth!:** According to Buddhist teachings, when Buddha was born, he took seven steps, then raised one hand to the sky and said this phrase.

• **I think, therefore I am!:** This is a famous phrase from French mathematician and philosopher René Descartes.

• **Deculture!:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, this is the Zentradi expression for surprise in the anime series Macross.

• **Please touch this stone!** Something wonderful will happen: "Something wonderful" is a line from the second movie in the Space Odyssey series, 2010: The Year We Make Contact.

• **It is The Dawn of Man:** "The Dawn of Man" is the title of the first act of 2001: A Space Odyssey.

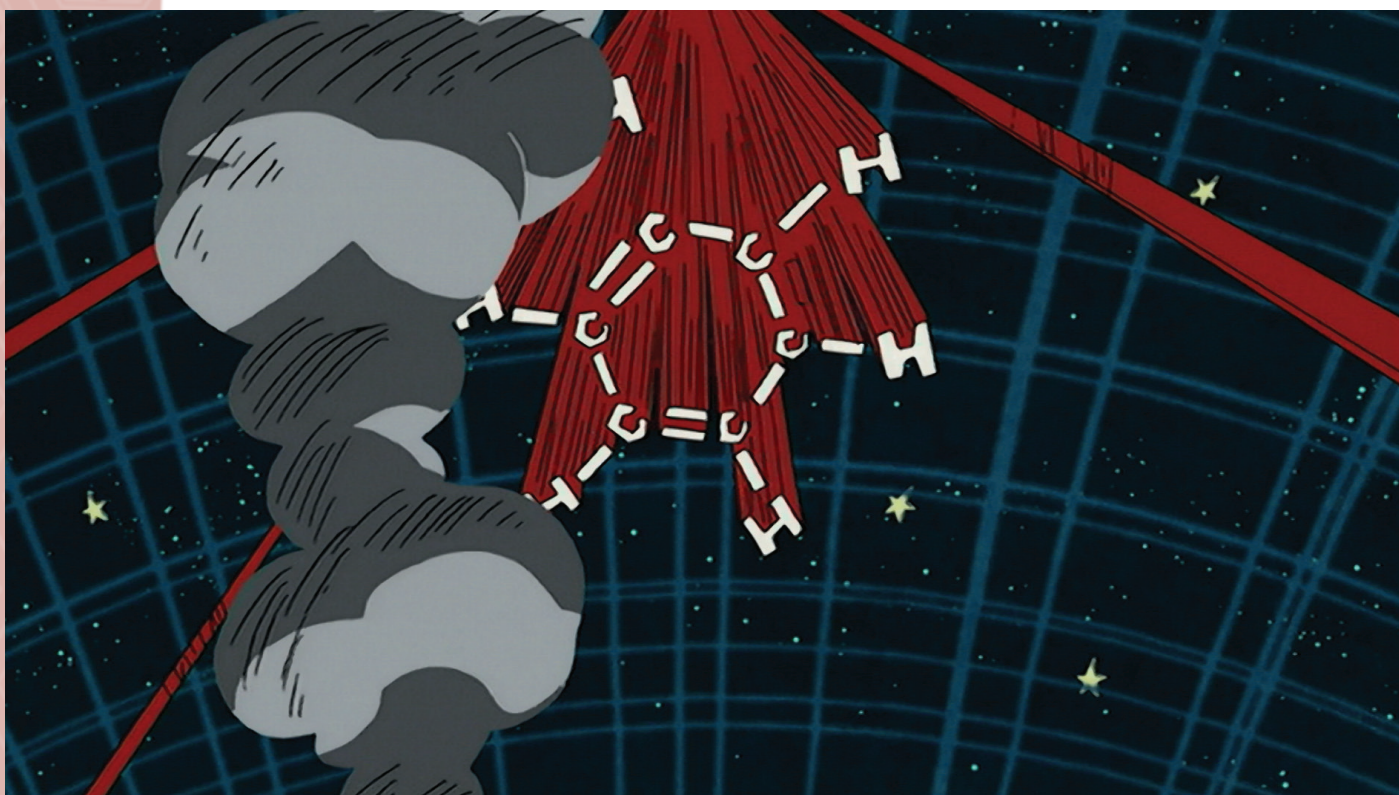
## **NOTHING TO SHOW FOR ALL THAT EFFORT BUT DESPAIR**

This is a spoof on Ultra Fight episode 174, "Nothing to Show for All That Effort But Bones". And it features one more new cast member: Kiri, as an Alien Goron.



## CHEMICALS IN THE SKY

As Nozomu eats by his campfire, the camera zooms upward to a molecular model in the sky. It's the model for Benzene, a natural constituent of petroleum. It's one the chemicals that gives gasoline its distinct smell. It's also highly toxic, and a known carcinogen.



## LES ANI-MISERABLES

This next episode preview is a play on *Les Misérables*, the famous 1862 novel by Victor Hugo. However, sharp-eyed viewers might catch that there's something else there, written in parenthesis. This is the title used for the Japanese translation of *Les Misérables*: *Aa, Mujou* ("Oh, How Cruel"). Here, it's been changed to "*Aa, Kujou*" ("Oh, the Complaints").

Also, "It is nothing to be animated. It is frightful not to move," is a parody of Jean Valjean's line from the story, "It is nothing to die. It is frightful not to live."



# EPISODE 10

## TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME



In the original manga version of this story, Nozomu is at Korakuen Stadium in Tokyo. It was built in 1937, and was the Yomiuri Giants' home stadium for almost 50 years. However, the stadium was demolished in 1988.

But now, in this animated version of the story, the stadium's layout and triangular lights mean that it's Yokohama Stadium, in Yokohama. This stadium was built in 1978, and is home to the Yokohama Baystars.

### **"BALLS SURE DON'T TRAVEL AS FAR THESE DAYS, HUH?"**

Depending on the material used and how it's constructed, a baseball will have a lower or higher coefficient of restitution, which affects how far it flies after being hit with a bat. In America, the way baseballs are made for professional play has been standardized since around 1934. But in Japan, until quite recently, each team could choose their baseballs from among nine approved manufacturers. And the balls from those nine manufacturers had varying coefficients.

This is what Nozomu is talking about when he says, "Ballparks deliberately make it so the balls don't fly as far." Starting in the early 2000s, many teams started to choose balls with lower coefficients, to reduce the amount of home runs players would hit.

Eventually, in 2011, it was decided that the construction of baseballs would be standardized across all teams, to more closely match the equipment used in other leagues around the world.



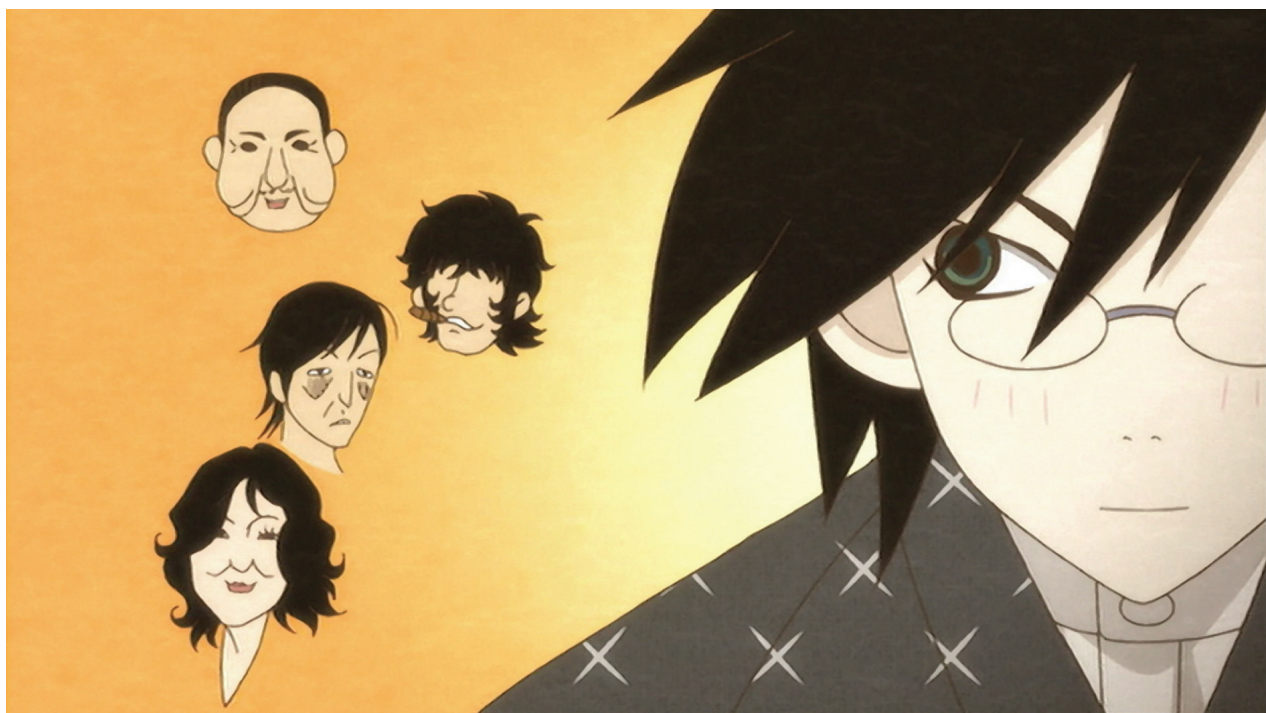
## NEW TANKS, NEW INTERLINKING, HIGHER-PRECISION ORDNANCE MINIATURE ROBOTS...

At a defense technology symposium in 2007, Japan's Ministry of Defense featured two exhibits: "Miniature robots (for recon, intel-gathering)", and "Towards the Realization of Gundam (Advanced Personal Equipment System)". This Lupin-style text is directly referencing that symposium (and predicting that nothing will come of it).

### DETERIORATED BLOSSOMS, FLOWING WATER

This title is a play on one of Yasunari Kawabata's essays, *Fallen Blossoms, Flowing Water*. The word "fallen" is "rakka" in Japanese, but here's it been changed to "rekka", which means "deteriorated".

**"AH, THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO DETUNE THEIR OWN FACES, AREN'T THERE?"**

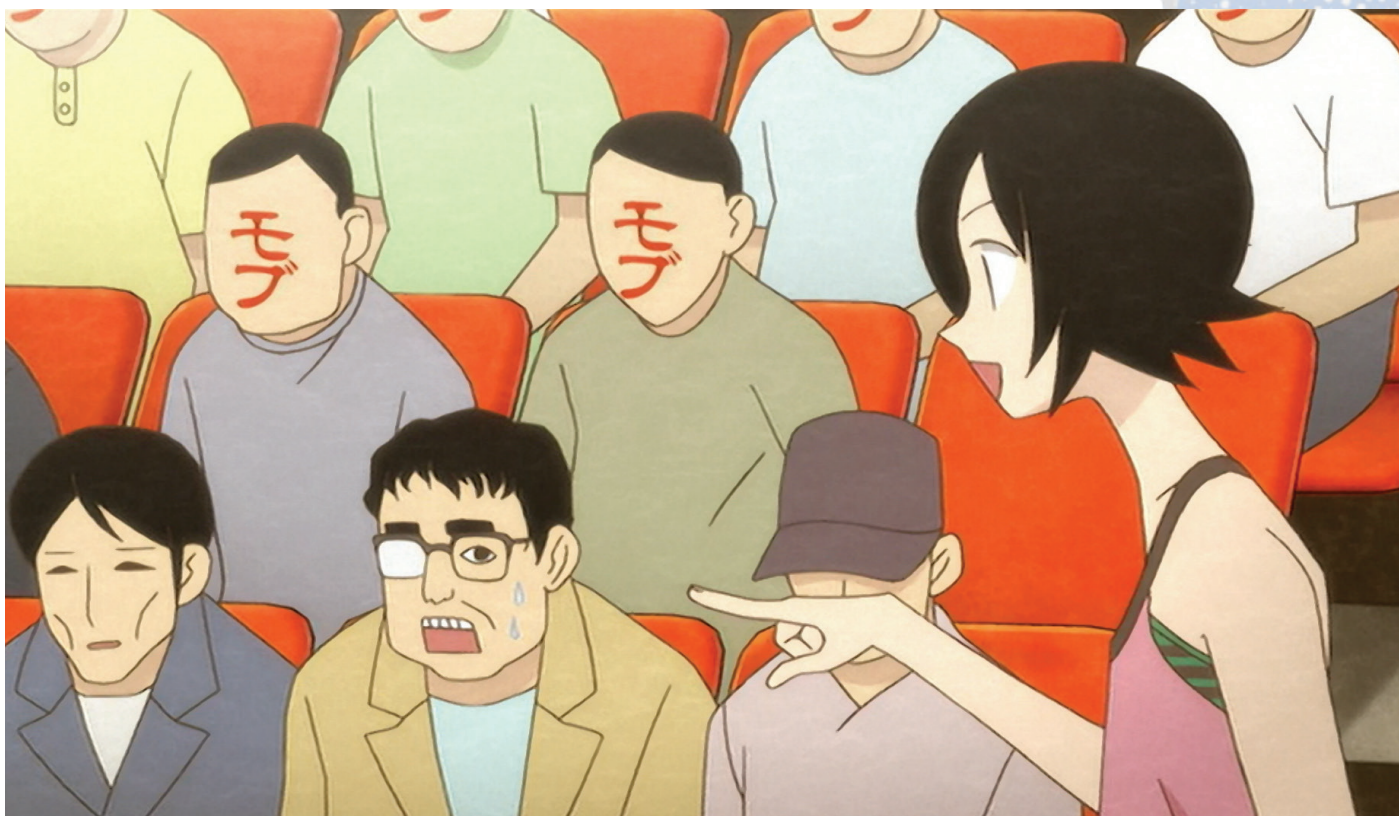


As Nozomu says this, four faces pop up in the background behind him. From top to bottom, they are:

- **Joe Shishido**: An actor who got cheekbone implants in 1957. Afterwards, some said he was "ruggedly handsome", while others said he "looked like a chipmunk".
- **Cobra**: The hero of Buichi Terasawa's *Space Adventure Cobra*. Originally Cobra was a handsome, long-haired outlaw. But when he wanted to retire, he surgically altered his face and changed his hair so that he would look like a regular guy.
- **Mokomichi Hayami**: A model and actor. In a famous commercial for Vitamin Water, Mokomichi and some friends were grilling outside. But when one of them turned around to offer Mokomichi a skewer of beef, Mokomichi's face was all distorted and tired, and he claimed to be an herbivore as he chewed on some nearby weeds.
- **Satsuki Katayama**: Mentioned in a previous liner note, Satsuki Katayama was one of the House of Representatives winners in 2005. When Nami objects that "one of those faces is the original", she's talking about Satsuki.



**"WAIT, HE'S A CELEBRITY...!"**



Nami is pointing at Cunning Takeyama, a comedian and actor. We can't say much about his hair care routine, but he is well-known for being a fan of American football, specifically the Green Bay Packers.

### **TODAY'S GAME IS OVER**

This game was between the Rakuten Golden Eagles and the Shidax Baseball Club... but the Shidax team was officially disbanded in 2006.

### **DETUNE WORLD**





This shop has a long list of things to detune, so they'd better get started. Starting from the top left, there's:

- **Former Prime Minister Akagi:** Norihiko Akagi was the Minister of Agriculture in 2007. At a time when he was under heavy suspicion of expense fraud, he showed up to a press conference with huge bandages on his left cheek and forehead. He wouldn't talk about his expense reports, and he wouldn't explain what the bandages were for, either.

- **Injured Idols:** Riding on the coattails of Rei Ayanami's popularity from Neon Genesis Evangelion, a photobook was released in 2007 called Injured Idols! Hot Thai Girls at Momojuji Hospital, featuring pictures of girls in bandages making lewd poses.

- **Cheetamen 2:** The Cheetamen is an NES game that released in 1992 as part of a compilation cartridge called Action 52. It's a legendarily bad video game (with surprisingly catchy music). A sequel was planned, but never released... until 1996, when 1,500 repurposed Action 52 cartridges were found in a Florida warehouse, all containing copies of Cheetamen II. The second game was somehow even worse than the first, with bugs and glitches making it nearly unplayable.

- **Bright Blue:** In 2006, an anime called Brighter than the Dawning Blue made waves among anime fans, for all the wrong reasons. The animation was exceptionally bad, and the perfect example of its quality was a scene where a character named Feena is cutting a cabbage. The cabbage was drawn as a perfect sphere, with concentric circles inside.

- **Radcliffe's Jaw DVD:** Daniel Radcliffe, the actor who started playing the role of Harry Potter as a child, developed a cleft chin as he grew older. In fact, it appeared as early as Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets which released in 2002. It was a visible reminder that the actor was older than the character he was supposed to be.

- **Happi Happy:** There was a comedian in the 1990s whose stage name was Koala. He got married in 2000, and in 2004, he consulted a psychic about changing his name, in order to bring good luck to his family. At the psychic's recommendation, he changed his name to "Happy Happy". Less than three years later, Happy Happy was divorced.

- **Nice Boat 12:** This is a reference to the "Nice Boat" meme mentioned in a previous liner note. The "12" is because it was School Days episode 12 that was replaced with footage of a boat.

- **Surstrom:** The full word is supposed to be "surströmming", which is fermented herring. It's a dish that originated in Sweden; basically it's fish that have been salted just enough to avoid rotting during the fermentation process. It is considered to be one of the most putrid-smelling foods in the world.

Also, the sign at the top of the shop, so high up it's almost off the screen, says "Mishibitsu". This is an anagram of Mitsubishi, the giant Japanese conglomerate. In 2002, the Mitsubishi Fuso Truck division found itself in hot water when a tire came off one of their heavy-duty trucks, and ended up striking and killing a housewife and injuring her two small children. As the investigation continued, it came to light that there had been 57 separate cases of tire-hub failure, and the company had been covering up the whole thing to avoid a costly recall.

## DETUNER CORNER

And even more things to detune! Here are all the references stacked up behind Jun-chan:

- **Glasses - Braids:** Stereotypically speaking, these are things used in manga to make girls look less attractive.
- **Aneha - Blueprints:** If you recall from a previous liner note, the architect Hidetsugu Aneha was arrested in 2006 for falsifying earthquake safety data.
- **Gasshern - (second half):** This is meant to be Casshern, specifically the 2004 movie version. Its visuals were impressive, as it was one of the first movies to have completely digital backgrounds. But its story ran on too long (the runtime was 2 hours 20 minutes), and audiences felt the second half overstayed its welcome.
- **Tales from Earth\*\*\* - Director:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, the Earthsea series of novels are well-regarded. The movie Tales from Earthsea, directed by Goro Miyazaki, is not.
- **Red Paint - White Paint - Red Paint:** If you remember from a previous note, Kazuo Umezu, author of The Drifting Classroom, painted his house in red and white stripes... and then his neighbors sued him over it.
- **Positive Ion - Rust:** Metal rusts when it's oxidized, which causes it to lose electrons and form positive ions.
- **Rotting House:** The kanji used on the cardboard box are 腐自家, which isn't technically a word, but the kanji themselves mean "rotten", "self", and "house", and can be pronounced "fu-ji-ya". This is a spoof on Fujiya (written 不二家), which is a real-life chain of confectionary stores and restaurants that's been around since 1910. However, longevity didn't save it from scandal. In 2007, it was revealed that Fujiya had been using expired milk and eggs to make their products.
- **Ugly Cute:** Japanese culture is full of "kawaii" ("cute") things, like Hello Kitty or Doraemon or Pokémon. But there's a kind of counter-culture that also exists, and it's called "kimo-kawaii" ("ugly cute"). A prime example would be Kobitodukan, a line of characters that look like disfigured old men wearing pajamas shaped like peaches or mushrooms or lily pads.

## LEGENDARY DETUNER JUN-CHAN

Jun-chan here is a parody of Jun Kitami from the 1990 manga series Wangan Midnight. Jun was called the "Tuner from Hell", since he tuned a cursed race-car known as "The Devil Z".

## WILD BEAST

Bob Sapp is an American mixed martial artist who's well-known in Japan. His nickname in the ring was "The Beast", and for a while, he had a pretty successful record. But after a falling-out with K-1 in 2007, he started to fight for small promotions, where he would quickly give up during his bouts. When asked about it, he explained: "Am I throwing these fights? No. Will I go into that ring and receive large amounts of damage for small paychecks? No.... These small

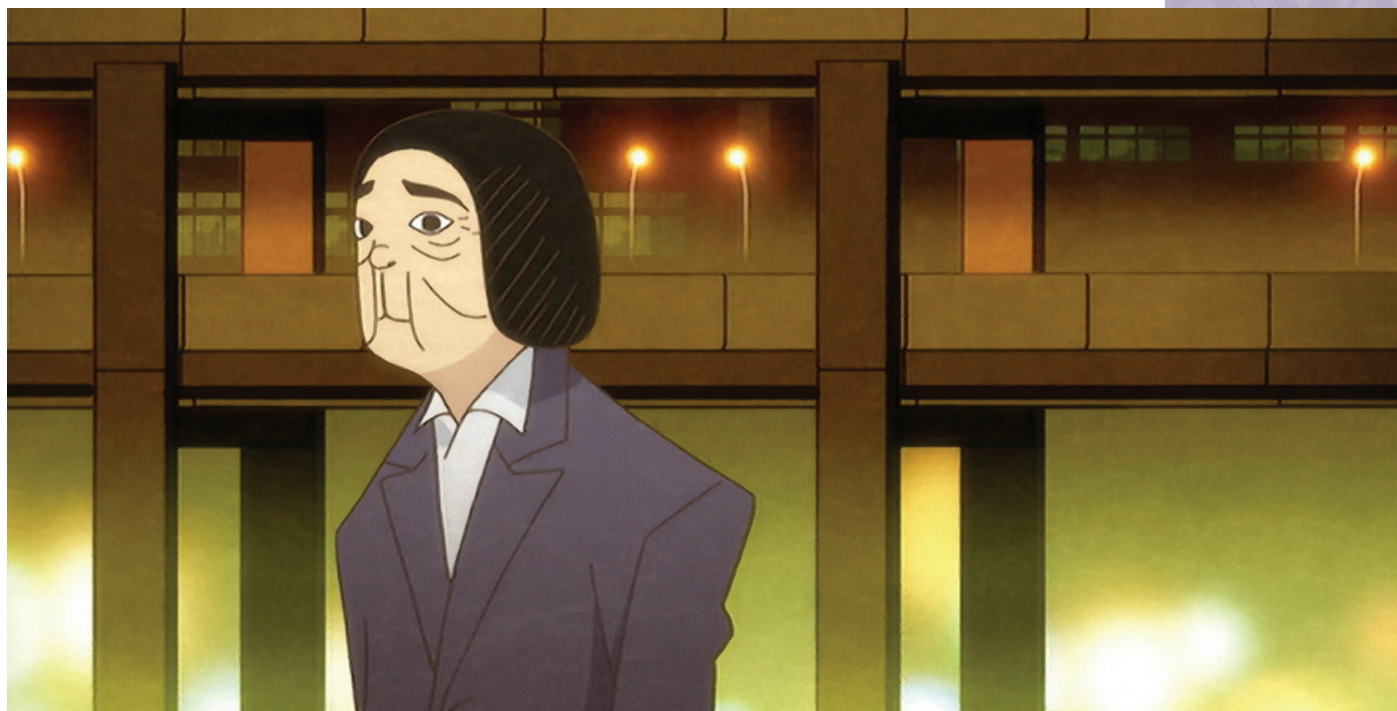


organizations you see that look so wonderful, they pay none of your bills if you get hurt, period. If you want to get hurt for a small amount of money in a fight, we call that the military.”

### ***DID YOU KNOW? DEVILS LIVE BY THE BAY...***

The aforementioned manga series Wangan Midnight was famous for throwing in poems alongside its stories of gritty street racing. They were affectionately called “Wangan Poems”, and this poetry flashing across the screen is a parody of what they were like.

### ***“...SO I DELIBERATELY DETUNED MY CABINET.”***



The man saying this is Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister. He took office in September of 2006, and within a year, four of his ministers ended up resigning due to political funding scandals, one of them even taking his own life. When Abe’s party then lost control of the house in July of 2007, he announced that he was reforming his cabinet, which is why someone comments, “I hear he’s gonna detune it even further!”

### ***“...THEY DELIBERATELY PUT THAT GUY IN! BALLSY MOVE!”***

They’re referring to Hideo Hashimoto, a midfielder who played with Gamba Osaka. He was a part of the Japan team for the Asian Cup in 2007, but he had the shortest playing time of anyone on the team (aside from the members who didn’t play at all).

### ***“THESE GUYS ARE DETUNED, TOO?!”***

The Japan Self Defense Forces are “detuned” in a sense by Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which disavows war as a means to settle international disputes.

### ***“THESE ARE DELIBERATELY DETUNED!”***

Kafuka flies in with another big list! Here are the ones that could use some explanation:

- **Characters using dialects:** For example, the token “character who speaks with a Kansai accent” in any given anime.

- **“Relaxed” education:** This is another reference to Yutori Education, the school policy which shortened the school day and relaxed the curriculum.

- **Opening credits up through ep. 3:** The first three episodes of Zoku Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei were text-based, with not much animation.

- **2,000 yen bills at the money exchange:** 2,000 yen bills are very rare. They were only printed between 2000 and 2004. Overall public opinion on the bill was negative, since certain ATMs wouldn't even accept the bill, and cashiers had no easy way to store them in registers.

- **Asian Cup refs:** The AFC Asian Cup is a soccer competition held among 24 teams in the Asia-Pacific Region. In the early 2000s, Japan's team was quite strong, and they won the championship in both 2000 and 2004. However, in 2007, they ended up in fourth place.

- **Echi\*\*\* Ryoma playing rightie:** The censored name is Ryoma Echizen, the main character from Prince of Tennis. He's naturally left-handed, but he'll swap to his right hand if he thinks his opponent isn't very tough.

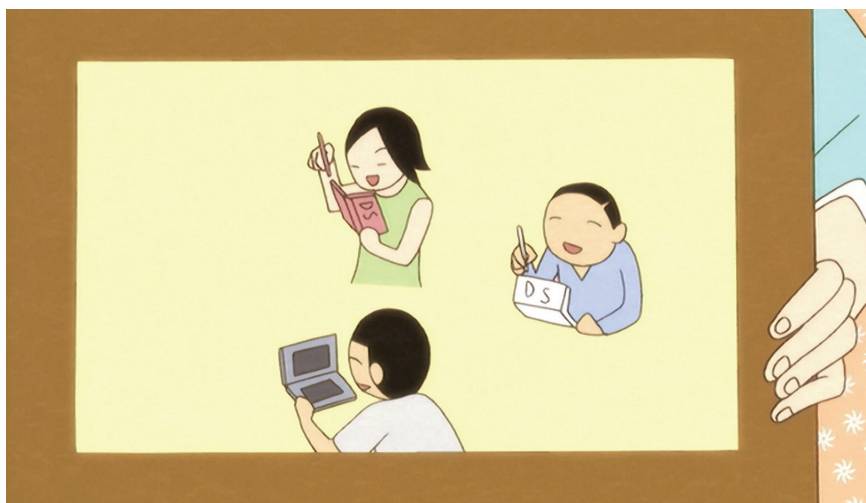
- **Chinese theme parks:** The most famous example is the Beijing Shijingshan Amusement Park. In 2007, a Japanese report revealed that the park was blatantly infringing on several different companies' copyrights. Video footage showed people in knockoff Winnie the Pooh and Mickey Mouse costumes parading past vaguely disturbing Shrek statues on their way to meet up with off-brand versions of Doraemon and Hello Kitty. As of this writing, the park is still operational, but after a nice chat with the World Trade Organization, the place is Mickey Mouse-free... for the most part.

- **Instant ramen from famous shops:** You actually can buy instant ramen from certain fancy ramen shops, like Nakiryu and Iida Shoten. And it is good... but it's not quite the same.

- **A red tint on blockbuster anime DVDs:** Disney's 2002 DVD release of Spirited Away in Japan had an abnormal red tint to the video. It was bad enough that Japanese consumers actually banded together and sued Disney over it. Disney resisted at first, but eventually settled and issued a formal apology.

- **Fewer seats inside ramen shop = longer lines:** Many popular ramen shops are actually quite small in size. One would think that, after finding fame, the shop would move to a bigger location with more tables. However, they usually just stay in their small spot, which leads to long lines outside. And according to some, a long line serves as free "advertisement" for the store.

**"A GAMING HANDHELD FULL OF BLEEDING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY GOT A LUKEWARM RECEPTION..."**





Here, Kafuka is comparing Sony's PlayStation Portable versus the Nintendo DS. (Though she censors the name of the DS in her speech, the on-screen picture shows the letters "DS" right there in plain sight.) When all was said and done, the PSP ended up selling around 80 million units, but the less-powerful Nintendo DS dwarfed it in sales, selling over 154 million.

### **"METICULOUSLY CRAFTED COMMERCIALS FOR VOICE ACTRESSES' CDS PUT FANS AT EASE!"**

Ai Nonaka, the voice actress for Kafuka, and Ryouko Shintani, the voice actress for Nami, both had new CDs releasing right as this episode aired.

### **"IN NEW YORK, AWFUL ANIME SCULPTURES ARE HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM AS ART!"**

This refers to Miss ko<sup>2</sup>, a 1996 work by Takashi Murakami. It's a six-foot-tall sculpture of an anime girl in an orange maid outfit, and it sold for over \$560,000 in 2003.

### **"OH, IT'S A FLEA MARKET FOR DETUNING PARTS!"**



There's a pretty big spread on the blanket, here. Let's check out what's for sale:

- **Birthing Machine:** In 2007, Japan's Health Minister, Hakuo Yanagisawa, was giving a speech on the declining birth rate in Japan. At one point, he said: "The number of women aged between 15 and 50 is fixed. Because the number of birth-giving machines and devices is fixed, all we can do is ask them to do their best per head... Although, it may not be so appropriate to call them machines." Indeed, his remarks were considered dehumanizing, and he drew a lot of criticism both in Japan and internationally.

- **For Use in Anime:** This is a handheld paper fan featuring everyone's favorite manga assistant, Maeda-kun!

- **AAA:** This can of spray paint is a reference to when the Japanese pop group AAA came to perform in Baltimore, MD in 2007. At an offsite photoshoot, they saw a rock sprayed with

graffiti, and after consulting a member of their staff, added their own graffiti: “JPN AAA 2007.” They then took a picture of it, and posted it to their blog. The problem, of course, is that graffiti is illegal. Once the picture was posted, complaints and criticisms started to pour in. The group quickly removed the picture, apologized to the Baltimore authorities, and apparently worked with them to clean up the stone.

- **Some kind of regenerative water:** Agriculture Minister Toshikatsu Matsuoka committed suicide in 2007 amid a firestorm of political funding scandals. One of the big ones that stuck out was a 29 million yen utility bill for his parliamentary office, where all the utilities are free of charge. He explained it by saying they’d installed a special tap water system so that all the employees could drink “some kind of regenerative water”.

- **Hot Spring Mix / Chlorine:** There’s a town in Nagano called Shirahone Onsen (“White Bone Hot Spring”), where the spring water is a milky white due to magnesium and calcium sediments. But in 2004, tourists were shocked to discover that some resorts in the area had been adding chemical bath salts to the water. The water was no longer as naturally white as it once was, so resort owners felt forced to either add chemicals, or lose customers. As the national discussion on onsens continued, it also came to light that some bathhouses - not just in Nagano, but nationwide - recycled their bath water, letting the same communal water be used for a week or more. The Health Ministry has since made laws declaring that recycled onsen water must be treated with chlorine.

- **Lucky:** A Lucky Bag, as seen in episode 5.

- **Ilhan Kobe:** İlhan Mansız is a German-born Turkish soccer player who made a big splash at the 2002 FIFA World Cup. However, in 2003 he started to have knee problems, which became a full-blown knee injury in 2004. And 2004 is exactly when he was signed on by Vissel Kobe, Kobe’s professional soccer club. In the end, İlhan was able to play just three matches before leaving the team.

- **Natto Diet:** Discover! The Big Encyclopedia of Everything was a variety show that got taken off the air in 2004 for making dubious health claims about various products. A follow-up program was made, Discover! The Big Encyclopedia of Everything II, and it went just as poorly as the first program did. In 2007, announcers on the show claimed that eating natto would help people lose weight. This caused a run on natto at stores around the country. However, it was soon revealed that the production company fabricated their own test results and faked photos of their test subjects.

- **Mysterious Fruit:** To the right of the Natto Diet book, there’s a spiky green ball. This is a durian, a type of fruit that grows in Southeast Asia. It has a sweet, mellow flavor, but its scent is incredibly pungent. Some hotels and public areas have even banned the fruit because of its smell, which is somewhere between rotting onions and raw sewage.

- **Beer Z:** This is meant to be “Asahi Nama Beer Z”, a line of beer that Asahi produced in 1991. It wasn’t especially beloved, and got a taste revamp in 1993.

- **For Use in Magazine:** Looks like it’s the next chapter of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei...

- **2007 Problematic Statements Compilation:** If you’ve read the season 1 liner notes and these season 2 liner notes so far, it should be clear that 2007 was full of “problematic statements” from all over Japan - from cabinet ministers and company presidents to anime producers and even cartoon cats.



• **Bombardier:** Bombardier is a Canadian aircraft manufacturer; and in March 2007, a Bombardier passenger plane was forced to land at the Kochi Airport without its front landing gear. After investigation, it was concluded that the front tires had failed to lower due to a problem with the landing gear door.

• **Creative Lyrics:** Natsumi Abe, one of the founding members of the idol group Morning Musume, released a poetry book called NATCHI in 2000. But in 2004, it came to light that some of the poems were plagiarized from other artists.

**"FOR EXAMPLE, BY INSTALLING THIS INTO A GROUP, IT WILL BE DETUNED NICELY!"**

While Kafuka is saying this, there's a big red arrow pointing at a golden statue marked "HITOE". This is a reference to Hitoe Arakaki from the band SPEED. SPEED was a four-member pop group, and while the other three girls looked like regular Japanese idols, Hitoe had a more reggae-style appearance. She loved to dance, and traveled to Jamaica many times to learn about authentic Jamaican music.

**"THINGS ARE DETUNED BY INSTALLING CERTAIN PARTS!"**

Here's yet another list of detuning examples!

• **Magazine → This manga:** In other words, "Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei makes Weekly Shounen Magazine just a little bit worse."

• **2006 Iranian National Team → Daiei:** Ali Daei is an Iranian soccer player who started playing professionally in 1987, and had an outstanding career. However, time passed by as it always does, and in 2006, Daei was still playing, even though he was in his late 30s. When the 2006 World Cup came around, fans and the media criticized him at the time, saying he should have retired and let someone younger take his place.

• **Triple Alliance → Italy:** The "Triple Alliance" was a military alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy in the late 1800s. However, Italian popular sentiment was against joining the alliance, due to Italy's war-torn history with Austria. So Italy's level of dedication to the alliance was always in question.

• **The Land of Dreams → The Bird Room:** In this instance, "the land of dreams" is referring to Tokyo Disneyland, and "the bird room" is the classic attraction The Enchanted Tiki Room, which features animatronic tropical birds that sing and put on a show. The Tokyo Disneyland version has been around since 1983. However, in January 2008, The Enchanted Tiki Room was closed. It eventually reopened in July 2008, with Stitch from Lilo & Stitch added in to the show.

• **So\*y → LCD Panels:** In 2007, Sony released the world's first TV set with an organic electroluminescence (EL) display. Organic EL TVs didn't require a backlight behind the screen, so they were thinner than LCD TVs and used less electricity. However, they were also fairly expensive. So when organic EL sales weren't as high as Sony hoped, the company changed course and created a joint company with Samsung to go all in on LCD displays.

• **Melon → Ham:** Cantaloupe slices wrapped in prosciutto are a popular summer appetizer in Italian cuisine. However, some people are of the opinion that cantaloupe by itself is a bit better.

• **LDP → Taizou:** “LDP” is the Liberal Democratic Party, and “Taizou” refers to LDP member Taizou Sugimura. If you remember from a previous liner note, Taizou was the youngest person to ever win a seat in the House of Representatives, and he was constantly saying immature things that made his colleagues squirm.

• **Ghi\*li → Museum Director:** This is yet another poke at the Studio Ghibli movie *Tales from Earthsea*, and its director, Goro Miyazaki. Before Goro became a director of movies, he was director of the Ghibli Museum in Mitaka, from 2001 to 2005.

**“WOW, THIS IS A GREAT DETUNING JOB!”**



As the crowd gathers around Abiru, there are two men near the back - one with a purple shirt that says “dream”, and another with a green shirt that says “time”. This is a reference to a 2006 legal battle between singer/songwriter Noriyuki Makihara, and famous manga artist Leiji Matsumoto.

In 2006, Makihara wrote a song called *Yakusoku no Basho* for the pop duo Chemistry. In the song, there’s a line that goes:

*Yume wa jikan o uragiranai* (“My dream does not betray time”)  
*Jikan mo yume o kesshite uragiranai* (“And time would never betray my dream”)

This angered Leiji Matsumoto, who thought that the line sounded very similar to something he had written in the final volume of *Galaxy Express 999* way back in 1981:

*Jikan wa yume o uragiranai* (“Time does not betray my dream”)  
*Yume mo jikan o kesshite uragiranai* (“And my dream would never betray time.”)

The only difference between the two was that the words *yume* (“dream”) and *jikan* (“time”) had been swapped. Leiji Matsumoto was so upset that he went on TV and publically accused Makihara of plagiarism, and made repeated demands for an apology. Makihara responded that he



had never read Galaxy Express 999, and that he had no intention of plagiarizing Matsumoto's work.

Things got so bad between the two that in late 2006, Noriyuka Makihara actually sued Leiji Matsumoto for defamation and harassment. Makihara ended up winning the lawsuit, and the court ordered Matsumoto to pay \$24,000 in damages.

## **"ARE YOU DETUNING YOURSELF A LA NAGASAWA MASAMI?"**

Masami Nagasawa is an award-winning actress who also happens to be a bit busty. She's had to wrap her chest in the past in order to take on certain roles.

## **"YOU CAN PANDER AS HARD AS SUZUKA!"**

The manga series Suzuka by Kouji Seo is full of fan service, to the point where it was sold in shrink wrap in North America.

## **AN UNMARRIED ELECTRICAL ENGINEER BECOMES THE SLAVE OF A CAFE HOSTESS...**

The first sentence of this Lupin-style text is referring to Naomi, a 1925 novel by Jun'ichirou Tanizaki. And the second sentence is the plot of the 1915 novel Of Human Bondage, written by W. Somerset Maugham. In both novels, the main characters are duped and misled by women that they thought they loved.

## **A FOOL'S WORK**

This episode title is another reference to the aforementioned novel Naomi. Naomi's original Japanese title is Chijin no Ai - "A Fool's Love".

## **HIRO NAKAMURA IS... SYLAR IS...**

Hiro and Sylar are both characters from the hit American TV series Heroes. Hiro Nakamura had the ability to manipulate time, and Sylar was a serial killer who could steal other people's powers.

## **NEW RELEASES**



A group of three otaku are debating over whether or not to get the hottest new game, "Busty Boy". But they might be better off with the game that's on the shelf behind them: Ef: The First Tale, a visual novel that released in 2006. (SHAFT, the animation company behind Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei, also produced two seasons of Ef anime.)

## SOME MEMORIES YOU WANT TO FORGET

This slogan is also from Ef, specifically the 2007 anime Ef: A Tale of Memories.

## QUITE A SIGHT

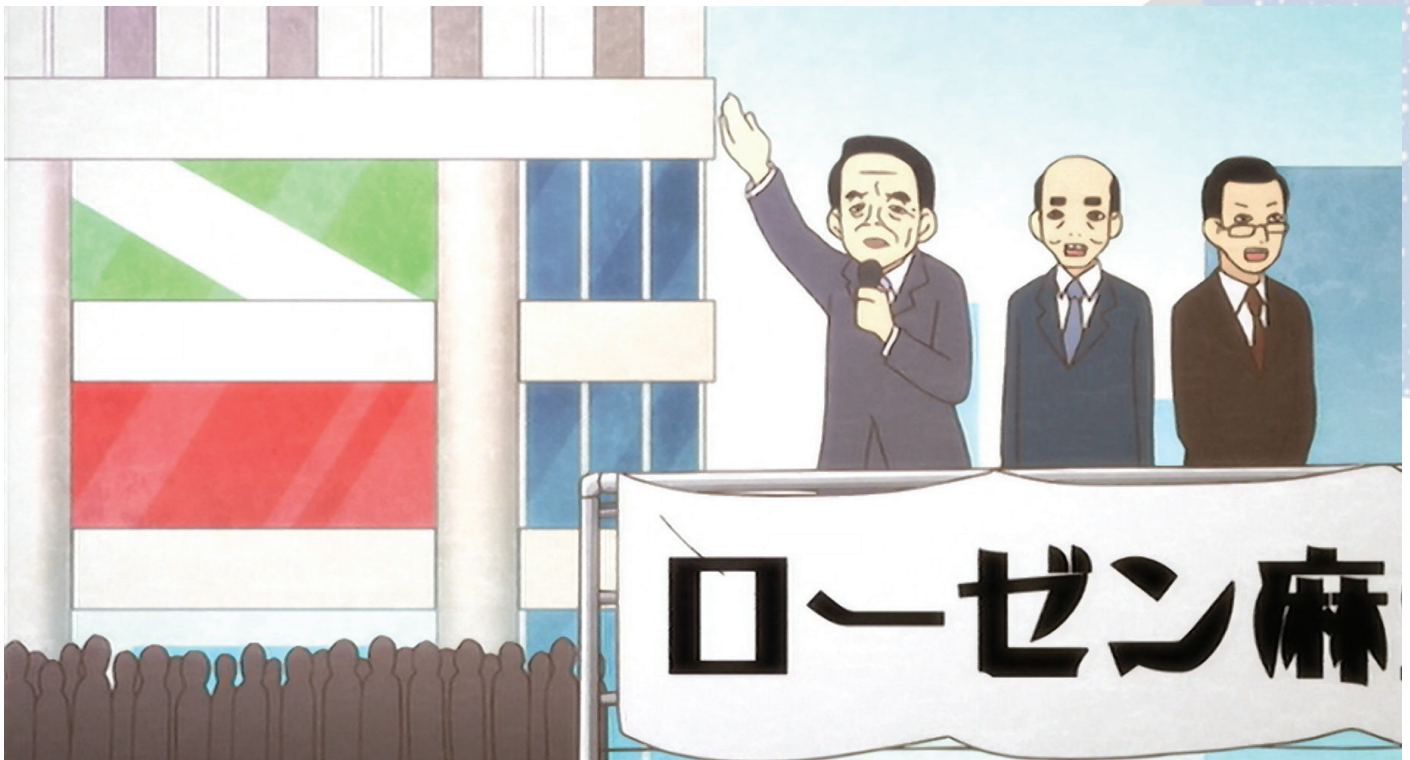
The group of guys debating over cosplay are standing on Chuo Dori, the main street in Akihabara. We can tell from the shops behind them, which are all parodies of real stores:

- **Ban Kibote:** Don Quijote, the Japanese discount store
- **Anime:** Animate, the anime goods shop
- **TAIKO:** Taito Station, a giant arcade
- **Soft:** Sofmap Amusement, an eight-floor video game store

## ROZEN ASO

Former Prime Minister Tarou Asou is well-known among otaku for his positive stance on anime and manga, and how he believes that Japanese pop-culture can connect Japan with the rest of the world. He's also a manga fan himself; when he was spotted reading Rozen Maiden manga at the Haneda Airport, it earned him the nickname "Rozen Asou".

**"SELF-PROCLAIMED OTAKU OF AKIHABARA!  
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH CAPTAIN MAJID?"**



This scene is based on a real speech that Tarou Asou gave on September 9, 2006. At that time, he was one of the final candidates to replace Koizumi as prime minister (though he eventually lost to Shinzo Abe). Because Asou was so beloved among the otaku audience, he actually went to Akihabara and gave a speech near the Akihabara UDX building which can be seen here in the background.

And he really did mention "Captain Majid", which is the Arabic version of the soccer manga Captain Tsubasa.



## "DO THESE REALLY WORK?!"

Nozomu laments over things that people have fooled themselves into believing are good:

- **Mini mart 2,500 yen bento boxes:** 2,500 yen is around \$25, which is an incredible sum to pay for a box lunch at a convenience store.

- **F1 at Fuji:** The Japanese Grand Prix, a Formula One motor race, had been held at the Suzuka Circuit every year since 1977. However, in 2007, it was moved to the Fuji Speedway, and what followed were a whole mess of problems - shuttle buses had to be shut down because a road near the east gate sank, spectators in seat area C couldn't see the race at all, and bentos at the park cost 10,000 yen (and we thought 2,500 was bad!).

- **Tsundere TV:** In 2007, a company called E-Revolution released a pocket television called the Segnity. But unlike a regular TV, it also included a pre-recorded girl's voice... and the voice was tsundere. So if you turned the volume down too far, she would complain that she couldn't hear the program anymore. If you changed the channel, she would reply, "Okay, I'll change it. But not because you asked me to!" Basically, it took the concept of "struggling with technology" to a whole new level.

- **Bush Talk:** In 2005, web developer Eric Gundersen made a cellphone ringtone that caught the media's attention. It was a voice clip of then-President George W. Bush complimenting the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and it looped endlessly over the song "City of New Orleans". He considered the ringtone to be a protest against the government's response to Hurricane Katrina.

- **Koji\*\* Yoshio:** This is meant to be Yoshio Kojima, the previously mentioned comedian who had several goofy catchphrases, including "Sonna no kankei nee!" ("That has nothing to do with it!"), "Ahh! I made a boo-boo!" ("Aa, heta koita!"), and "OPPAPPI!"

- **Po\*sche SUVs:** The censored name is Porsche, a car company usually known for its high-performance sports cars. So when the company announced that they were making an SUV model called "Cayenne" in 2002, critics were skeptical. But, for what it's worth, as of this writing, the Cayenne is still in production.

- **Eri\*\*-sama's personality:** This is referring to actress Erika Sawajiri. She was quite popular when she debuted in 2002, winning several newcomer acting awards. But in 2007, she was giving an interview about her latest movie Closed Note, and she was clearly unhappy with the film. She had her arms crossed, and all her answers were terse. After that, she was widely criticized for disrespecting her co-stars and the film's staff.

- **Crossplayers:** "Cosplay" is when people dress up in costume to look like anime and video game characters. "Crossplay" (a portmanteau of "cosplay" and "crossdress") is when people dress up in costume to look like characters of the opposite gender.

- **Unnecessary psycho outbursts:** Looking at you, Nozomu...

- **Goat vs. Russian Woman:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, this was a running gag on Sayonara Zetsubou Housou. Perhaps the joke went on longer than it should have.

- **Maeda-kun on the DVDs:** Wait, who doesn't like Maeda-kun's pasted-in face?

- **M\*Griddles:** This is meant to say “McGriddles”, the indulgent breakfast sandwich McDonald’s introduced in 2003. It’s made with egg, cheese, and either bacon or sausage sandwiched between two maple-flavored pancakes.

- **P\*psi Cucumber:** “Pepsi Ice Cucumber” was a specialty flavor of Pepsi that only released in Japan during the summer of 2007. It was green, and tasted like Pepsi with cucumbers in it. The flavor has never returned.

- **Tomochika in a bikini:** In 2007, the female comedian Tomochika, who was 34 years old at the time, held a bikini photo session and invited the media to attend.

## A RISKY BET

The images on the reels in Harumi’s “Dream Slot” machine are all characters from Yes! Pretty Cure 5. The first matchup is Kawarino and Bunbee, then there’s Gamao and Girinma, then Coco and Nuts, and finally Milk and Syrup.

## MEIOU PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL

Today, the school is named “Meiou Private High School”. That’s the name of Kurama’s high school in the manga/anime series YuYu Hakusho.

## EXTRA EXTRA

Among all the students marked as “Extras”, (“mobu”, モブ), there’s one student named Bob (“bobu”, ボブ).

## “WHEN I SAW THE BACKGROUND PICTURE FOR THE TITLE PAGE IN MANGA VOLUME 12...”



This part of the episode is based on chapter 111 of the manga, and the “background picture” that this Lupin-style text is referring to is chapter 111’s title page. It’s a huge 10x11 grid filled with all 110 title pages from the previous manga chapters.

However, not all of the manga stories have been animated, which means the staff couldn’t create a fully accurate anime version of the grid. They tried to pad it out as much as they could, but they didn’t quite make it. Their grid is 10x8.



## THE FIRST-TIME CUSTOMER CONDITION

This episode's title is a play on Junpei Gomikawa's six-part novel, *The Human Condition*.

### "IS THIS KYOTO'S FAMOUS SYSTEM OF REFUSING SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS WHO WEREN'T REFERRED BY A REGULAR?!"

This is an actual thing. There are many shops in Kyoto that have been around for hundreds of years, in neighborhoods where everyone knows everyone else. Shops like these often won't allow first-time customers to enter, unless they're introduced by an existing customer that the store already knows.

But all is not lost! Nowadays, there are hotels and travel agencies that will refer you, as a service. So if you want to get into a shop that normally turns away new customers, options exist to help you get in.

## KUROSU HIGH SCHOOL

That was quick... The school's name has already changed to Kurosu High School, which was the name of the school in the 1998 manga series *Reiko the Zombie Shop*.

## THOROUGHLY REJECTED

Though Nozomu doesn't get to finish his sentence, the screen behind him starts filling up with a list of scenarios that lend themselves to rejection.

- **Mixi friend requests:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, Mixi is a Japanese social media platform. In the early days of the service, people generally accepted almost any friend request, whether they knew the sender or not. But eventually, accepting random friend requests fell out of favor, and the requests were more likely to be rejected.
- **Clubs for young people:** Japan is a very safe country. But even so, Shibuya can be an intimidating place to wander around at night for newcomers.
- **Shinjuku Loft:** Shinjuku Loft is a live music venue in Kabukicho. However, it's a room about the size of half a basketball court, in the sub-basement of a multi-tenant building. So if the location doesn't turn you away, there might not be any room left for you inside once you get there.
- **Sleeping in parks:** After the economic bubble burst in the 1990s, the number of homeless people increased. It was not uncommon to see camps of homeless people living under blue tarps in parks or by rivers. So if you had it in your mind to sleep in a park, whether by desire or necessity, you might find yourself in the middle of a turf war. (However, after a large investigation into the homeless problem in 2007, several steps were enacted to provide people with basic necessities of living, shelter, and support. Since then, homelessness has seen a sharp decline. As of the 2021 count, there were 3,824 homeless people in all of Japan.)
- **Competitive bidding:** Large projects, for example a city construction project, almost always start with competitive bidding. Construction companies review the project and submit their "bid" - how much they will charge to do the job. "Open Bidding" means that the process is transparent, and any company can submit a bid. But a very popular alternative is "Selective Bidding", where only pre-selected, pre-qualified companies can submit a bid. And you can bet first-timers aren't allowed.

• **Yakiniku joints with regulars:** We've mentioned before about how popular restaurants in Japan are often small. Well, small restaurants with regular customers will sometimes even save seats for those customers, which makes it especially hard for first-time customers to get in.

• **F\*ve Star Stories:** Five Star Stories is a manga by Mamoru Nagano, which he started in 1986. 37 years later, the story is technically still going, but chapter releases are very slow. Five Star Stories' plot is detailed and intricate, so anyone who wants to jump in at this point has a lot of catching up to do (and a lot of waiting to do, as well).

• **Zhuge Liang & Liu Bei:** There are many legends and stories surrounding the Three Kingdoms period in Chinese history. One of them is that when the warlord Liu Bei wanted to meet with the strategist Zhuge Liang, he had to visit three times before he was allowed to see Zhuge Liang and discuss plans with him. This gave rise to the idiom "sango no rei" (literally "bowing three times"), which means "to show someone special courtesy".

• **Elite university hospitals:** In Japan, university hospitals usually have the biggest facilities and the most advanced equipment. But if you want to see a doctor there, you almost always need to get a letter of referral from a smaller clinic first.

• **24:** When the manga version of this Zetsubou-sensei story aired, the American TV series 24 had just finished its sixth season. If someone wanted to get into the show for the first time, they would have over 100 hours of watching to do to catch up.

• **G\*in Saga:** Similarly, Guin Saga was also a behemoth of a series. It started in 1979, and the author, Kaoru Kurimoto, wrote 130 volumes of the story before she passed away in 2009. Four years later, work resumed on the project, and 17 more novels were released to finish her story, bringing it to a grand total of 147 books.

## "Y-YOU'RE RIGHT, PERHAPS WE BECAME UNWELCOMING TO NEWCOMERS AT SOME POINT."

As Nozomu says this, there's a bunch of text on the blackboard behind him. Though it's partially obscured, we can see enough to tell that it's examples of real refusal signs seen in Kyoto. The full wording should be:

- As a general rule, we run tabs for our customers, so unknown first-time customers will cause us trouble.
- In order to provide the best service, we decline to serve first time customers whom we do not know.
- The guests at this establishment value their privacy, so unknown patrons may not enter.
- There are women who wish to do business here, so to avoid any trouble, unknown customers are not allowed.

## SHIROUTO DOUTEI

You might have noticed that Rin called their family establishment a "ryoutei" (which is a traditional Japanese restaurant), but this sign says "doutei".

The kanji on the sign are 汁音童亭, which can be pronounced "shirouto doutei", but they don't really mean anything. But if we were to swap the kanji to 素人童貞, they would be the real words "shirouto doutei" ("amateur male virgin"). This is a term for "a man who's never had sex with an 'amateur', only professionals" (i.e., he's never been with anyone but prostitutes).



## NICE TO MEET YOU



For the next few minutes, the screen will have character introductions plastered around the sides. For the benefit of all first-time viewers, here are what the intros say:

- **Nozomu Itoshiki:** The main character. He's a negative-thinking teacher who sees everything in a negative light. He's also known as Zetsubou-sensei.
- **Kafuka Fuura:** She's a super-positive girl. She sees everything in a positive light, and serves as a counterbalance to Zetsubou-sensei's out-of-control lessons. She also has a dark side.
- **Chiri Kitsu:** She's an extremely well-organized girl who isn't satisfied until everything is perfect. It drives her mad when things are sloppily done. She often injures people.
- **Perry-san:** A strange foreigner whose purpose is to open everything in Japan. He was living a lonely life until Kafuka-chan took advantage of his human weakness. He tried to open Zetsubou-sensei's heart and failed.
- **Nami Hitou:** Normal.
- **Harumi:** Harumi Fujiyoshi's first name. It comes from the former location of the semiannual main event for otaku, Comiket. Up through Comiket 49 in 1995, it was held at the Tokyo International Trade Fair Center, colloquially known as "Harumi" since it was in the Harumi district of Chuo in Tokyo. *[Writer's note: This isn't completely true. Comiket had several former locations before it swapped over to Tokyo Big Sight in 1996. But Harumi was one of the most frequently used.]*

• **Jinroku-sensei:** Supposedly, he's a long-time teacher at Zetsubou-sensei's school. But with the tattoos on his back, the way he smells of gunpowder, and all his scars from bullet-removal surgeries, maybe he's actually some sort of military commander?

• **Ai Kaga:** A girl with a victimizer complex. She apologizes for anything and everything. She has been given too much screen time lately.

• **Matoi Tsunetsuki:** She's a stalker girl. She experiences feeling of love deeper than anyone else's, so she stalks Zetsubou-sensei. Her ex-boyfriend is Takashi.

• **Tarou Maria Sekiutsu:** She's an illegal immigrant/refugee girl. People take so much pity on her that she was able to start her own charity fundraiser for herself in class. But more importantly, who's the girl who keeps showing up around her lately?

• **Kagerou Usui:** Class President. He has no sense of presence, and can't be seen by those around him. But if his hair gets messed up and his bald spot is uncovered, he quickly becomes the center of attention.

• **Meru Otonashi:** She's a troll-texting girl. She's appeared in a lot of episodes recently, so she's had several chances to use her skills. Her father has an overbearing personality.

• **Meru's Phone:** When the show first started, she used D\*C\*M\*, but somewhere in the middle, it got swapped over to A\*. So now there's a consistency problem. If I had specified from the start which phone service she used in each episode, this error could have been avoided. But I was so busy that I just kind of left it up to the rest of the staff. It really is hard to rely on other people! (-A note from the assistant director) [*Writer's note: The censored company names are DoCoMo and Au.*]

• **The Best Woman:** She is literally the best woman in the world. Only Hamasho would ever have a chance with her. However, if you call the Seijo Gentleman's Club and meet a certain set of conditions, you can become a Gold Member. Then, if you order the Six-Hour VIP Course and ask for "the best woman", you might be able to meet her! But it costs 250,000 yen to start, with an extra 70,000 yen per each additional hour.

• **Rin Itoshiki:** The fifth daughter of Hiroshi Itoshiki, patriarch of the Itoshiki family. She's head teacher at the Itoshiki School of Flower Arranging. She was meant to be graceful as befits a young lady, but lately, she's been taking Kaere's place as official sex-appeal character.

• **Chie Arai:** She's the school counselor. She hasn't appeared much lately. Could it be that she took up an S&M job, even though she's a government employee?

• **Majiru Itoshiki:** The first son of Hiroshi Itoshiki's eldest son. He's currently freeloading at Nozomu's house. Lately, he seems to have become a plaything for Kiri Komori. But that's to be expected of a shota.

• **Manami Ookusa:** She's both a high school student and a housewife. Because of her husband's many debts, she works hard at various part-time jobs every day. But I can't be the only one who thinks her husband is just using her, right? I worry about what'll happen to her after graduation.

• **Mayo Mitama:** A girl who is just as she appears. Lately she's been leaving the knifework to Chiri, and going for arson instead. She still uses her metal bat, though.



• **Kiri Komori:** She's a hikikomori. It used to be that she refused to leave her house, but at Zetsubou-sensei's urging, she became a "school hikikomori" who now refuses to leave the school.

• **Color Frame:** One of Director Shinbou's favorite video techniques. In live action shows, direct cuts don't feel as jarring as they do with animation, which has less visual information on screen. So a single-color frame is inserted in the gap between, to make the cut feel smoother.

• **Maeda-san:** Also known as MAEDAX. Recently upgraded to MAEDAX-G. He's a multi-talented man who even has voice acting credits to his name. Although a certain Anikan wrote that he wouldn't let them take any new pictures because he's a layman...

• **Jun Kudou:** He's a genius storyteller. There's no story he can't tell. Also, he's handsome.

• **Kuniya Kino:** He's a Library Committee member who hates losing more than anything. He was initially supposed to be a rival character to Jun Kudou, but now his defining traits are wearing ridiculous clothing and having a crush on Ai Kaga.

• **Color Conversion:** One of Director Shinbou's favorite video techniques. Nowadays, when he uses it together with a color frame, people have taken to calling it "Shinbou Color"! You should give it a try, too!

• **Color Fill:** One of Director Shinbou's favorite video techniques. For some reason, he's been using it a lot lately. This technique is also quite effective when paired with color frames and color conversion. However, if you use it too often, it looks sloppy.

• **Hitonami:** Exactly the same as everyone else in the world. Completely average. *[Writer's note: This second "Nami" character entry is defining the term her name is based on: "hitonami" (人並み).]*

• **Normal:** It's best to be a normal person. If you stand out, you'll just get picked on, or people will ask you all sorts of questions. For instance, if you tell someone that you work on anime for a living, people will say things like, "Oh? So you draw manga, then? Are you in Jump?" Or, "So if you're an animator, do you paint each drawing one by one?" Or they'll confuse your job with a million other things, and say, "Animators don't make much money, right? Must be tough," or, "Don't you think you should find a more normal job?" Er... sorry, I went off on a tangent there, but anyway, it's best to be a normal person.

• **Stick-dog:** A dog that often appears in the background during the show. It looks like someone drove a stick up the poor thing's bum.

• **Abiru Kobushi:** People think she's a victim of domestic violence. She always seems to have new injuries, but that's because she works part-time at the zoo. In chapter 104, she and Zetsubou-sensei went out on a date.

• **Fujiyoshi:** Harumi Fujiyoshi's last name. It's a play on the term "fujoshi".

• **Fujoshi:** Just as the kanji says, it means "rotten girl". It's an intentional misspelling of the term "fujoshi" which means "women and children". The term is used nowadays to refer to girls who like to read and watch boys' love manga and anime. Apparently, if they keep on reading BL as they get older, they become

“kifujin” and ultimately, the “pu-rincess”. [Writer’s note: These puns all revolve around the kanji for “rotten” (腐), which is often pronounced “fu” or “pu”. Using these kanji (腐女子), fujoshi just means “woman” or “girl”. But swap in that “rotten” kanji, and it becomes: (腐女子), meaning “a girl obsessed with yaoi”. Kifujin normally means “lady” or “noblewoman”, when it uses this kanji: (貴婦人). But if you replace the middle character with the “rotten” kanji, it becomes: (貴腐人), which means “an adult woman who likes yaoi”. And as for “pu-rincess”, they’ve taken the first letter of the word “princess” (プリンセス) and replaced it with the “rotten” kanji, to make 腐リンセス.]

- **BL**: Short for “boys’ love”. Less “realistic” and more “sparkly”. They almost exclusively depict relationships between men, but sometimes a relationship between a man and a woman is also shown.

- **801**: The term “yaoi” is short for “no buildup” (yama nashi), “no resolution” (ochi nashi), and “no meaning” (imi nashi). Many BL books follow this structure. There also seems to be something called a “yaoi hole”. For further information, please consult My Neighbor 801-chan. [Writer’s note: My Neighbor 801-chan was a web-comic from 2006 about a male otaku and his yaoi-obsessed girlfriend. (Using go-roawase, the numbers 8-0-1 can be read as ya-o-i.) As for a “yaoi hole”, since yaoi manga are usually written by and for girls, the sex scenes tend to have a distinct misunderstanding of anal sex. Characters are shown in positions and situations that wouldn’t be possible without something resembling a vagina. The fandom eventually just embraced that idea, and now this fictional orifice is known as the “yaoi hole”.]

- **Tsune Tsukimato**i: (Always following around) Someone who is always there every time you turn around. Someone who clings to you with single-minded devotion. It’s awful. [Writer’s note: This second “Matoi” character entry is defining the term her name is based on: “tsune (ni) tsukimatoi” (常(に)付き纏い).]

- **Komorikiri**: (Only staying shut in one’s room) To spend all your time in a single place. That place is often somewhere small or narrow. It’s different from spending all your time out at sea. [Writer’s note: This second “Kiri” character entry is defining the term her name is based on: “komorikiri” (籠りきり).]


- **Mita Mama Yo**: (Just as it appears) What you see is exactly what you get. [Writer’s note: This second “Mayo” character entry is defining the term her name is based on: “mita mama yo” (見たままよ).]

- **Yo\*\*\*ko Saku\*\*\***: A Japanese “freelance journalist”. She was previously a longstanding news caster with Ni\*\*\*\* Tele\*\*\*\*\*. [Writer’s note: The censored name is Yoshiko Sakurai. She’s the journalist who has already made several, uh, “cameo appearances” in both seasons of Zetsubou-sensei. She used to work for Nippon Television, from 1980 to 1996.]

- **The Stork**: A bird that can usually be seen flying through the sky in the background of the show. Storks are often used as way of deflecting children when they ask, “Where do babies come from?”

- **Tarou A\*\*\***: He seems to be a politician from some country or another. He was the Minister for Foreign Affairs (137th and 138th), Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications (3rd, 4th, and 5th), Minister of State for Special Missions (in charge of economic policy), Director General of the Economic Planning Agency, Head of the Libe\*\*\* Democratic Party’s Policy Affairs Research Council, and Secretary General of the Libe\*\*\* Democratic Party. [Writer’s note: The censored name is Tarou Asou. He’s a member of the Liberal Democratic Party. Just like Yoshiko Sakurai, Tarou Asou has also had several “cameos” in Zetsubou-sensei so far.]





• **[Zoku · ] Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei (anime):** The official title of the second season of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei, which began airing in July 2007. Series Composition is done by Yuuichirou Oguro, and unlike the first season, the episodes are split into three parts, A, B, and C. Also, starting with this season, Yukihiro Miyamoto has joined the main staff as Chief Unit Director. Each episode features its own special director and is animated in such a way that it seems to use the original manga as storyboards. Who knows where the show will go from here? The show's future all depends on how well the DVDs sell. Thank you for your support.

• **Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei (manga):** A sharp-witted manga from Kouji Kumeta, drawn in the "Taisho Romantic" style. Currently running in Weekly Shounen Magazine. It combines humor, drama, and even a bit of eroticism. This well-written story is about Class 2-He's homeroom teacher, Nozomu Itoshiki, and the hilarious situations he finds himself in as he applies his terribly negative viewpoint to everyday occurrences. This is a must-read series that everyone should buy. As of March 2008, there are 12 volumes currently available. Thank you all for your support.

• **Kaere:** This show's sex-appeal character. It is apparently her duty to flash her panties in every episode.

• **Panty Flash:** Getting a glimpse underneath a girl's skirt. Though when it comes to Kaere, her panties are practically front and center.

### ***"IS THIS ANIME SET IN THE TAISHO ERA?"***

He's asking this because of how Nozomu is dressed. Nozomu's clothes, a kimono with hakama, aren't often seen in modern-day Japan.

### ***"THE EAGLES AREN'T SUING YOU OVER THE 'HAIR' JOKE?"***

Just in case you need a refresher, Nozomu gave a desperate monologue in the very first episode of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei about how when he sees the logo for the Rakuten Golden Eagles, he can't see it as anything but the kanji for "hair" (毛). This joke actually permeates the whole show - anytime you see a visual reference to the Eagles team (for instance, on the scoreboard at the beginning of this episode), the kanji for "hair" is used.



**"OH, THIS IS BY CASVAL, ISN'T IT?"**



There was a section in the Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei tankoubon releases called “Letters from the Classroom of Despair”, where fans could send in correspondence. One fan, under the pen name Casval Rem Daikun, sent in a huge amount of illustrations, some of which were featured in volumes 9 and 10.

**"IT'S LIKE A REHASH OF THE "INTRO FOR BEGINNERS" FROM KAIZOU."**

This is referring to chapter 175 of Kouji Kumeta's previous manga, Katte ni Kaizou.

**"SPEAKING OF WHICH, HOW'S IT GOING WITH \*UNDAM?"**

Nozomu's voice actor is Hiroshi Kamiya. In the late 2000s, at the same time this show was being made, he was also playing Tieria Erde in Mobile Suit Gundam 00.

**"THE NAME OF SUZUKA'S DAUGHTER WAS FUUKA!"**

If you recall from episode 8, one of Nozomu's pieces of “secret information” was the name of Suzuka's baby from the manga Suzuka. The name wasn't public knowledge when the manga version of that Zetsubou-sensei story was released. But by the time the anime version came out (February 2008), the baby's name was old news.

**"WHAT'S WITH THE STORK? I DON'T GET IT."**

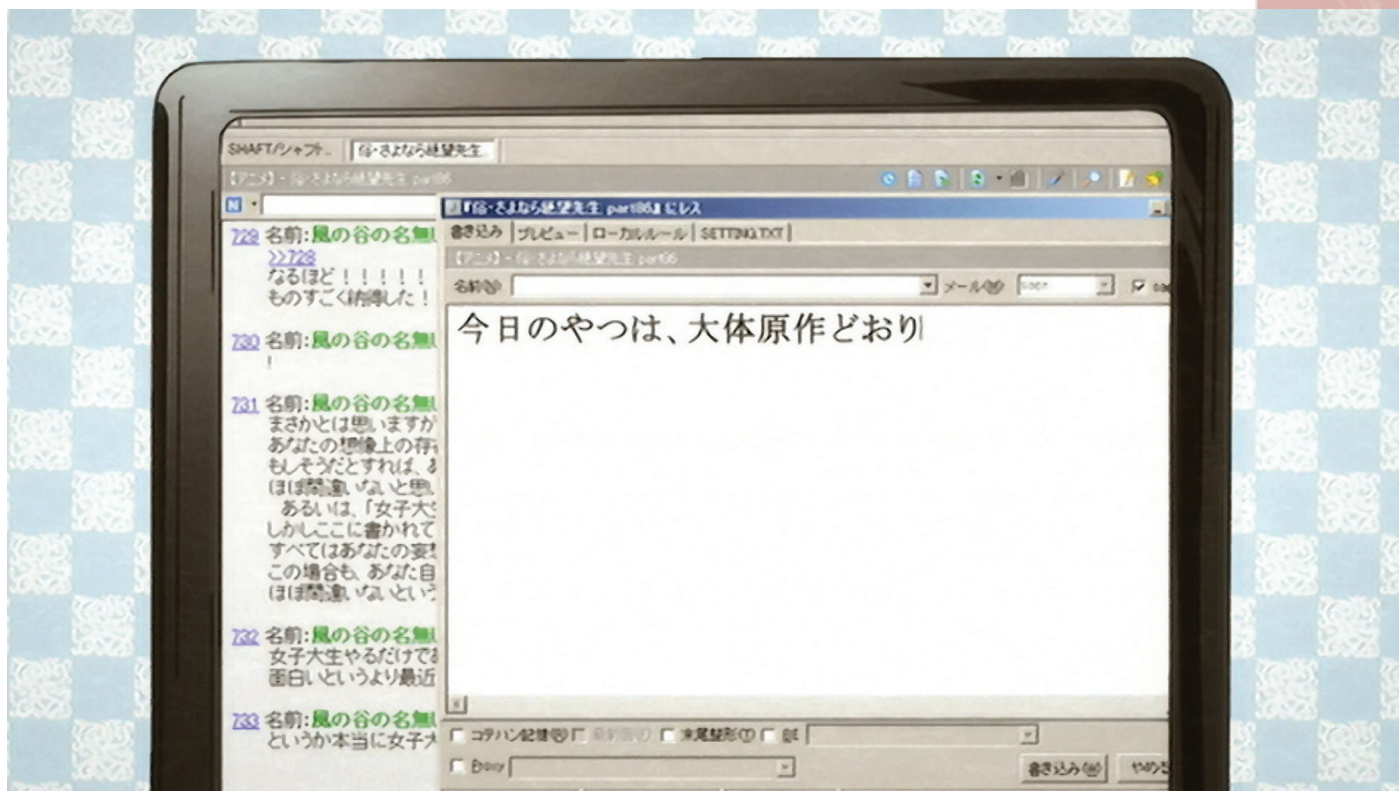
The joke here is that these fans - who should know the story behind the stork - have no idea what it means, because the manga chapter where it was introduced (chapter 41) hasn't been animated yet.

**"ARE YOU EVER GONNA DO POST-MAKEOVER KAFUKA?"**

And yet, these same fans seem to know about chapter 70 of the manga, which also has yet to be animated.



THIS EP. IS STICKING PRETTY CLOSE TO THE MANGA



This diligent otaku is typing up a report on 2chan, using a special 2chan-specific browser called Jane Style. Much of the text behind his typing window is obscured, but post 731 is based on an actual cypasta. The full text is:

*It might sound absurd, but couldn't this "younger brother" just be a figment of your own imagination? If that's the case, you're probably schizophrenic. On the other hand, it could also be that the "younger brother" does exist, but he never did any of the strange things you wrote about here, and it's all a delusion on your part. In which case, you're still probably schizophrenic.*

## CRIME AND NON-PUBLISHPMENT

This next episode preview is a twist on the famous Fyodor Dostoevsky novel Crime and Punishment. The original story is about a man in Saint Petersburg who plans to kill an old woman, and seeks to convince himself that it's justifiable, since he would use her money for lofty goals and extraordinary ideals. One of the lines in the novel (repeated here with a slight change) is: "Kiss the earth and say to all men aloud, I am a murderer!"

# EPISODE 11

## YUURAKUCHOU



Yuurakuchou is a district of Tokyo that's famous for its relaxed atmosphere. Streets are lined with bars and restaurants, which in the evening are full of businessmen on their way home from work. In this fictional version of the town, we can see several signs for places and products:

- **The Pepsi Cola logo**

- **Kerorin:** A brand of aspirin. The real version is spelled ケロリン, but this sign swaps out the first letter with the kanji for "hair", which can also be pronounced "ke": 毛ロリン

- **Ajisen Soumen:** The real brand is Ajisen Ramen, a chain of fast-food ramen shops. Soumen is a similar type of noodle to ramen, but soumen isn't usually served in a soup. Instead, it's served cold on a plate and meant to be dipped in a sauce called tsuyu.

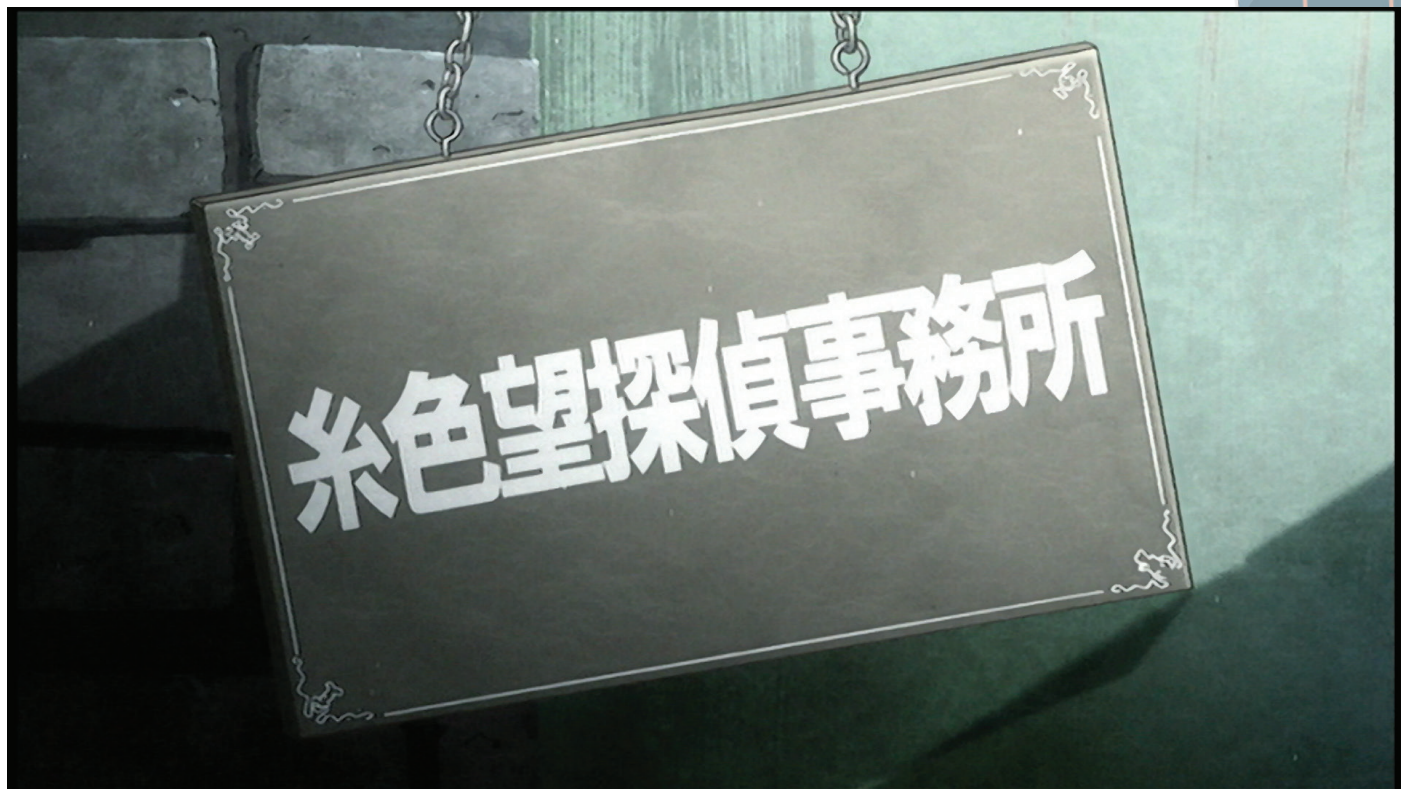
- **Kasutadoun:** If you remove the second "u", you get kasutadon, which is a steamed sponge cake filled with custard cream. It's a specialty down in Kagoshima.

- **Mokkosu Pub:** Mokkosu is another chain of ramen shops, which first opened in 1977.



## ITOSHIKI INVESTIGATIONS

This sign, which hangs askew from the doorknob, is a reference to the opening of the 1979 TV series Detective Story. In that series, the title of the show is displayed in a shot almost identical to what we see here in Zetsubou-sensei.



## THE MANUAL FOR FIGHTING LAWLESS POLICE PART 2

The book here is based on a real book, written by a man named Kenji Chiyomaru. In fact, other than the characters being in silhouette, the cover looks almost exactly the same. Kenji's book was also used as a prop in the first episode of the aforementioned TV series Detective Story.

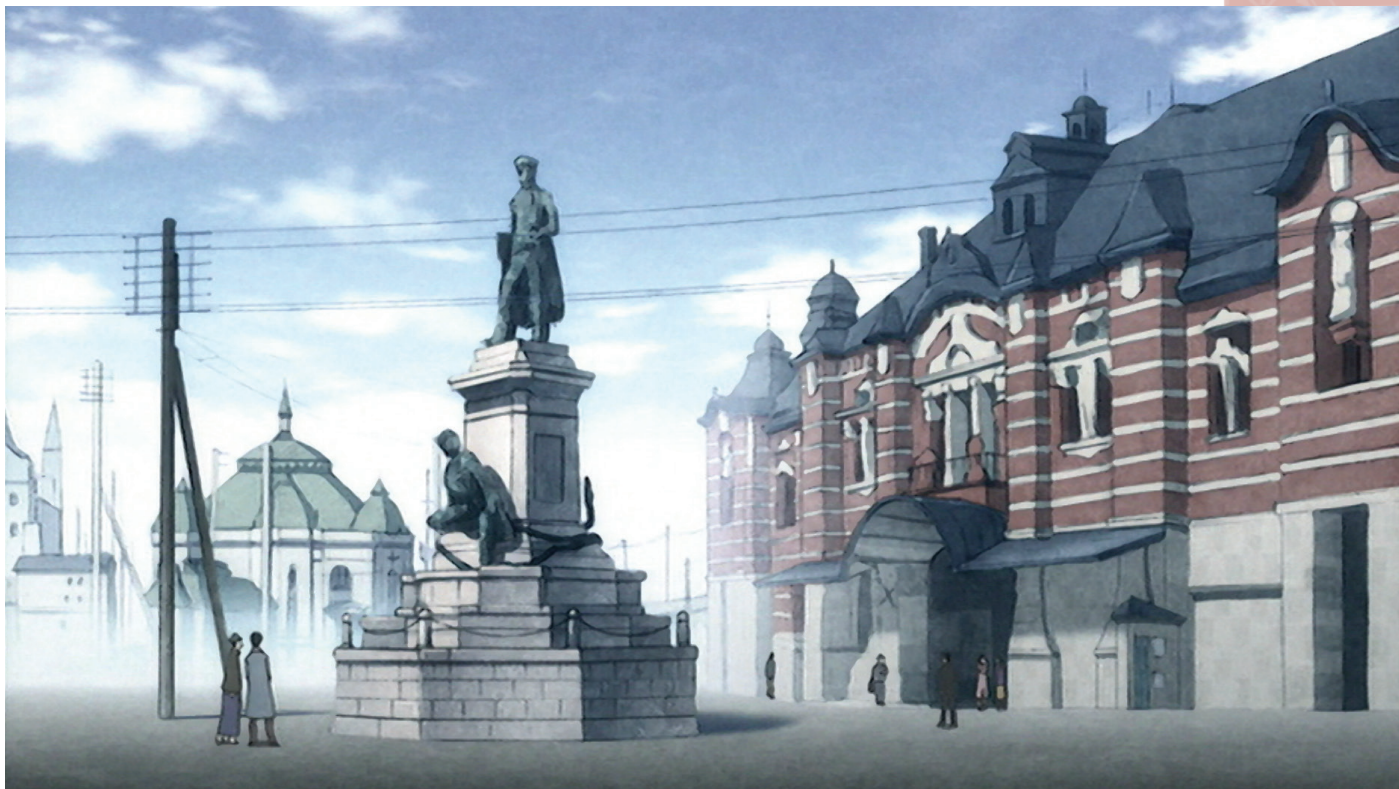
## HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE REST

In this story, Nozomu often scratches his head, scattering dandruff everywhere. What's more, whenever he travels, he wears a grey bucket hat. These are two key characteristics of Kousuke Kindaichi, a famous fictional detective created by author Seishi Yokomizo. There were 77 Kindaichi novels written between 1946 and 1980, and perhaps the most famous of them was The Inugami Clan, which has come up in several previous liner notes.

## "WHAT DID THEY WANT, SENSEI?"

Nozomu's "assistant" is Mato, but she's dressed like a boy. This is most likely a nod to Yoshio Kobayashi, a character created by famous mystery novelist Edogawa Ranpo. In Ranpo's novels, Yoshio Kobayashi first appeared as an assistant to the great detective Kogoro Akechi, but he eventually became the leader of a group of young sleuths known as the Detective Boys.

## A LINK TO THE PAST



Nozomu goes to catch a train at Manseibashi Station. However, that station no longer exists. The version depicted here, with the brick façade and the statue in front, is how the station first looked when it opened in 1912. Then the station was destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, and rebuilt with a smaller and simpler design. Eventually, the station was closed altogether in 1943.

As the train departs, it travels along a bridge with high arches underneath. This is the Usui 3rd Bridge, which served as a railway passage through the Usui Pass between 1892 and 1963. It was built with guidance from British engineer Charles Assheton Whately Pownall, which made it one of the first collaborations between Japanese and non-Japanese engineers in the early Meiji period.

And last but not least, from the direction the train is travelling, we can see that Nozomu is heading towards Nagano Prefecture. That just so happens to be where the events of *The Inugami Clan* took place.

## A FAMILIAR FONT

This episode has its own unique opening. It's nothing more than a black background and credits in a large, stark white font, played over the top of some mysterious, lilting music. But it's also an homage to the openings that director Kon Ichikawa used in his films about the famous fictional detective Kousuke Kindaichi (the detective that Nozomu is parodying in this story). Even the song itself is a very close parody to "The Ballad of Love" from Ichikawa's movie *The Inugami Clan*.

If the visual style of this opening seems familiar, you might be remembering it from *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. That show's director, Hideaki Anno, also used this same "stark text on black background" style, since he's a huge fan of Kon Ichikawa.



## TWELVE DARK ZETSUBOU GIRLS

Nozomu sees the girls in trench coats standing in a circle on the beach, and then the title appears: "Twelve Dark Zetsubou Girls". This is a parody of Ten Dark Women, another movie by Kon Ichikawa. In that movie, a married TV executive has nine mistresses, and the ten women band together to kill him. The women standing in a circle on the beach is an iconic scene from the movie, which was also featured on its theatrical poster.

## KIJIN VILLAGE

This story is set in Kijin Village (鬼人村), which is just one little kanji swap away from Onikobe Village (鬼首村), where the Kon Ichikawa film The Devil's Ballad took place.

## THE MANOR OF ITOSHIKI SAKÉBU

The Itoshiki manor looks suspiciously like the manor house in The Inugami Clan.

**"HE ALWAYS CRACKS THE CASE, BUT BY THE TIME HE DOES, EVERYONE INVOLVED IS DEAD."**

It's not uncommon for Kousuke Kindaichi cases to end with a high body count. Often the people who need to be protected aren't protected, and the murderer also meets with a grisly fate.

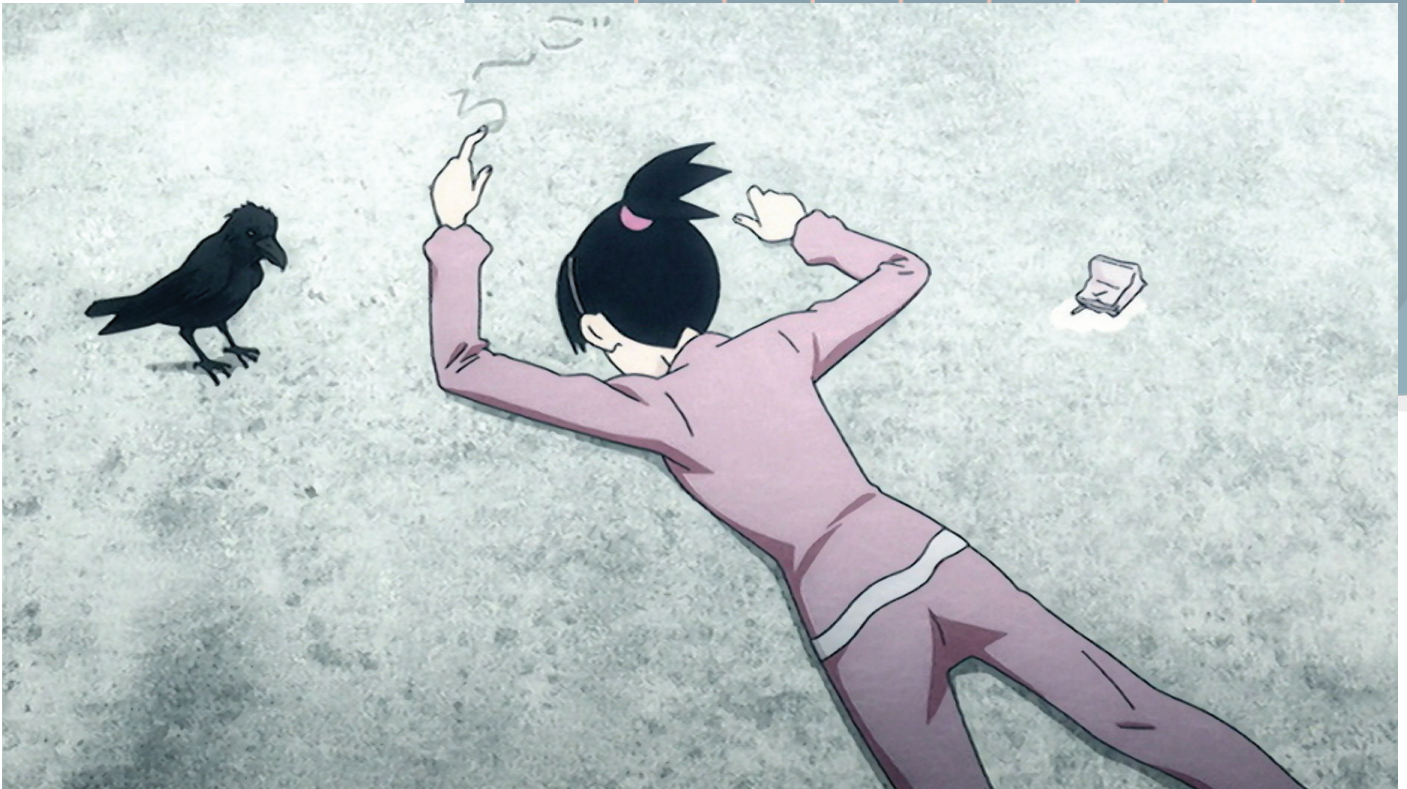
**"THE MAN IN THIS PORTRAIT IS ITOSHIKI-SENSEI?"**



Everything about this scene - from the layout of the room, to the portrait on the wall, to the way the characters argue over the top of each other - is a faithful recreation of the will-reading scene from The Inugami Clan.



**"BUT WHAT ON EARTH DO THE JUICE BOX AND "GOAL" MESSAGE MEAN?"**



The setup for Manami's death is all based on the 2000 visual novel *Air*, which was adapted into an animated TV series in 2004, and a theatrical movie in 2005. The story's main heroine, Misuzu Kamio, liked to drink Dorori Peach Juice from a similar-looking juice box. The dying message, "Goal", is what Misuzu said when her curse was broken at the end of the series. And the crow is a reference to her crow companion named Sora.

**BLINK AND YOU'LL MISS IT**



When Ai comes running up to the huddle of officers, a black mark appears in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. This is called a "punch mark" (or more colloquially, a "cigarette



burn"). In the olden days of projectors and film reels, a movie would often require more than one reel of film. The punch mark was a signal for the projectionist to ready the second reel on a second projector, so that they could start it up when the first reel ended. If all went well, the swap would be invisible to the audience.

Here in Zetsubou-sensei, the punch mark is signaling that the show is about to go to commercial break.

### **"THERE'S A KEY DIFFERENCE, BUT WE HAD TO DO IT."**

This little bit of wordplay is a reference to Seishi Yokomizo's novel Gokumon Island. In that story, Kindaichi mishears the words "ki chigai" (季違い), a poetic term for the changing of seasons. He instead thinks it's a more common word, also pronounced "kichigai" (気違い), which means "madness".

### **"FIRING WAVE MOTION GUN!!"**

The TV show that Zekkyo-sensei and his child used to watch is Space Battleship Yamato (Star Blazers in the US). It aired in 1974, and ended up being one of the most influential anime series of all time.

### **"IT'S A REFERENCE MURDER!"**

It wasn't just Manami - all the deaths have been references.

Maria is posed with her right arm pointing toward the sky. This is a reference to the original Mobile Suit Gundam, and the Gundam's famous "Last Shooting" pose from its fight with the Zeong at end of the series. The background behind her matches the scene from Mobile Suit Gundam, as well.

Meru's final resting pose is a reference to Sailor Moon R. In that series, after being attacked by Prince Diamond of Black Moon, Neo Queen Serenity is asleep in a crystal. Meru looks just like her, dress and all.

And as for Kaere, her impalement on a cross is a direct reference to Neon Genesis Evangelion. In the deepest, darkest recesses of Nerv headquarters, the angel Lilith is hung from an enormous red cross and impaled with a Spear of Longinus, in the same way that Kaere has been killed in the manor's oddly high-tech sublevel.

### **"AH, I HAVE IT!"**

In the Kousuke Kindaichi movies, this is one of Detective Todoroki's signature lines. He'll think he has the case figured out... but he usually doesn't.

### **"WHERE IS SHINKIRO?"**

This is yet another reference to a Seishi Yokomizo novel. In his 1936 work Shinjuro, "Where is Shinjuro?" is the opening line of the story.

Shinjuro was written before Seishi Yokomizo had created the character Kousuke Kindaichi, so the detective in this book is a man named Rintaro Yuri. However, when Shinjuro was adapted into a TV series in 1978, the producers swapped out Rintaro Yuri for Kindaichi, due to the latter's popularity.

## WHAT A BIG MOUTH YOU HAVE



Nozomu and the girls enter the storehouse, which is full of giant mouth statues. This is an homage to *Moju: The Blind Beast*, a 1931 novel by Edogawa Ranpo. It's a horror story about an unhinged artist who surrounds himself with enormous sculptures of body parts.

### **"YOU MEANT THAT IT WASN'T THE SAME AS THE ANIME THAT ITOSHIKI-SHI LOVED."**

The TV version of *Air* and the movie version of *Air* ended in slightly different ways. The ending of the TV anime took place on a city street, just like in the original game. But the movie ending took place on a sandy beach. Apparently Zekkyo-sensei liked the TV version of *Air*, but for whatever reason, the girls had to settle for posing Manami's body by the water instead.

### **ON DISPLAY**

The black and white photos on the wall are spoofs of pictures in the book *Flower of Evil: Rehabilitation from My Own Selfishness*. It's a collection of racy pictures of actress Mako Midori, who played a starring role in the 1969 film adaptation of *Moju: The Blind Beast*.

### **A FOND FAREWELL**

The final scene of this story, where Nozomu and the Inspector part ways as the train pulls away, is very similar to the end of the movie *The Devil's Ballad*. It's another Kousuke Kindaichi story, based on the novel of the same name from 1957.



## THE GIVING TREE



This is another story that takes place on Tanabata, the same festival from episode 4. If you recall, the strips of paper hanging from bamboo have people's wishes written on them. The ones we can see are:

- **Praying for safety on JR:** On April 25, 2005, a seven-car commuter train in Amagasaki was traveling too fast and derailed while going around a curve. The first car slammed into the parking garage of an apartment building and was lodged in so far that it took days to remove. The second car was then crumpled into an L-shape by the force of the remaining five cars. In total, 106 people died, including the train's driver.
- **More, please:** This is the nickname for Takeya Nakamura, a power hitter with the Seibu Lions baseball team. The nickname came about because he's a stocky guy, who presumably asks for second helpings at dinner. But he can also pack on the home runs; he started becoming a household name after hitting the most runs across both leagues in the 2005 interleague tournament. So "more, please" doubles as a request for even more home runs in a single game.
- **I want to be a celebrity forever:** There are two clues to this slip's meaning. The first is that there's a tiny kanji at the end, 萌, which can be read "moe". The second is that "celebrity" in Japanese doesn't just mean to be famous; it can also mean being really rich. Putting the clues together, it points to Moe Yamaguchi, a TV personality who started her career in 1999. In 2005, she married Shigeo Ozeki, the wealthy IT mogul who founded the internet startup company Axiv.com.
- **To join the UN Security Council and that everyone follows Cool Biz... I mean Warm Biz:** This slip represents the wishes of the Japanese government. For decades, Japan has sought a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. However, although the UK, France, and the US support Japan's candidacy, China and South Korea have expressed strong opposition. In 2005, Japan advocated for a reform of the Security Council, together with Germany, India, and Brazil - all of whom are seeking a permanent seat. As for Cool Biz, it's a government initiative to reduce electricity consumption. It started in 2005, with the government asking companies to raise office air conditioner temperatures to 82°, and to relax dress codes so that people could

wear cooler clothing to work. Warm Biz is similar, but it's something that companies developed by themselves: suggesting that people wear coats, sweaters and blankets in the winter rather than use fossil fuels for space heaters. Both Cool Biz and Warm Biz were successful, and are still practiced today. Cool Biz runs every year from May to September.

- **Please forget about the Piano Man:** In 2005, a man was found dressed in a three-piece suit, soaking wet, and staring into a McDonalds in Sheerness, England. He wouldn't say a word to anyone, and when social workers asked who he was, all he did was draw a picture of a piano. Once the newspapers caught wind of the story, it spread like wildfire across the world - who was this mysterious Piano Man? Four months later, the man finally said that his name was Andreas Grassl. Some say that his amnesia was a hoax, others say that it was genuine. In the end, only Andreas Grassl knows for sure.

- **That the statute of limitations will pass -Yuu:** Yuu Abiru was an idol and an actress, and in 2005, she appeared on a show called Truth or Doubt. The show was set up like a game of Truth or Dare, and she told the story of how she and her friends would steal boxes full of products and trash the warehouses they came from. She then revealed that the story was true, to the laughter of all the various hosts. The public wasn't quite so amused, however. Viewers voiced their displeasure about theft and vandalism being treated like a funny joke. In the end, her talent agency had to issue a formal apology, and the show itself was cancelled not long after.

- **To find buried treasure:** Legend says that Ieyasu Tokugawa, first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate, buried more than 400 golden koban coins somewhere in Gunma prefecture. No one has ever found it, but the most well-known search was attempted by Shigesato Itoi in the early 1990s. He had a segment on the entertainment show Gimme a Break where they used heavy machinery to dig around in the mountains. (If the name Shigesato Itoi sounds familiar, it's because he also wrote and directed the Earthbound series of video games for Nintendo.)

- **To get my popularity back! -Nishi Tamao:** In 2002, a bearded seal was spotted in the Tama River in Tokyo. The mass media picked up on it immediately, and gave him the name "Tama-chan". Crowds and TV crews started to follow the seal constantly, wondering if it could survive in Tokyo in the summer, and Tama became something of a national celebrity as he made his way through different rivers in the area. At one point, Tama became a regular sight near Yokohama, so

the local government gave him an honorary residency registration there, with the official name "Tamao Nishi". However, this sparked a protest, since this was a privilege that wasn't even given to all humans - foreign nationals weren't allowed on the resident record. This led to actual social change, and as of July 2012, foreign nationals are now a part of the same residency registration as Japanese citizens.

- **To be the governor of Tokyo -Nakamatsu:** Yoshiro Nakamatsu is a Japanese inventor who often appears on talk shows to discuss his inventions. He lives a rather odd life, and has several unusual patents to his name, like "glasses in the shape of eyes that make it appear as though the wearer is not wearing glasses", or "a self-defense wig that the wearer can use to strike an attacker". Yoshiro is also a perennial political candidate. Since 1995, he has tried (and failed) several times to be elected Governor of Tokyo.

- **To be more popular Wait, nevermind I just hope he keeps walking -Chiba Zoo:** This is another reference to Futa-kun, the red panda at the Chiba Zoo that became a national sensation in 2005.



## FUNNY FISH

As Nozomu tromps down the street complaining, he walks toward a building where Mato is hiding in the doorway. She's standing under a sign that says "Seafood Senri + Banri". Senri and Banri Kaibara were a comedy duo that started out in 1971. The duo's real names were Mari and Chisato Kaibara, and they were actually sisters; but they disbanded the act in 1977 when Chisato got married.

## WAYWARD APPLICATIONS

Kafuka holds up two college applications that she plans to use like wish slips. One is for the Momogaoka School of Music, and the other is for Nichidai Veterinary School. The Momogaoka School of Music is a real school, and it's also the setting for the popular 2001 manga Nodame Cantabile.

As for Nichidai Veterinary School... In the original manga version of this story, it was H-dai Veterinary School (H大学獣医学部), with "H-dai" being short for Hokkaido University. That's also a real school, which was used as the setting for the 1988 manga Doubutusu no Oisha-san ("The Animal Doctor"). However, here in the anime version, it's possible that the animation staff mistook the letter "H" for the kanji 日, which would turn the real "H-dai" (H大) into the nonexistent "Nichidai" (日大).

## "WHY BOTHER WITH THAT NOW? THE FALL TERM STARTS IN SEPTEMBER..."

The Tanabata Festival begins on July 7th, and continues on into August. That's a bit late to be sending in a school application...

## CRACKING THE CODE

When Chiri is reciting her very precise wish slip, there's a tone beeping in the background. The sound is Morse code - specifically an SOS distress signal.

## DETAILS, DETAILS

Two things about Chiri's life plan: STEP stands for "Standardized Test for English Proficiency". It's a two-stage test that covers vocabulary, reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

She also mentions a "TV Champion tea-tasting test". TV Champion was a variety show that ran from 1992-2008. Contestants on the show would compete to see who was the best at very specific tasks (like folding origami or setting up food displays), and the winner would be crowned "King".

## "IT'S SORT OF ON-BRAND FOR YOU TO MAKE A WISH LIKE THIS."

Maria's wish is "Peace for all human beings the world over". This also happens to be the same wish that a 14-year old illegal Thai immigrant named Chamnaut makes in the 1995 manga Working Girl.

## "ANYWAY, JUST WHEN ARE THESE WISHES SUPPOSED TO COME TRUE?"

As Nozomu says this, a tree full of wish slips is zooming up the screen in the background. Here are the wishes on display:

• **May I become a High Mobility Type -One-Day Zaku:** If you remember from episode 2, “One-Day Zaku” is a misreading of “Old Zaku”, aka the MS-05 Zaku I from Mobile Suit Gundam. In that show, the Zaku I line of mobile suits was eventually replaced with newly developed Zaku IIs which had several variants, including the High Mobility Type which specialized in space combat.

• **Please don't let our scheme be discovered!! -Kikkyou:** The name “kikkyou” here is written 吉凶, which means “luck”. Swap out the second kanji, and you get 吉兆, which is part of the name of an upscale restaurant chain called “Senba Kitcho” (船場吉兆). In late 2007, it was discovered that Senba Kitcho was mislabeling their food by serving standard quality meat as high-quality and charging high-quality prices. Then, a few months later, whistleblowers revealed that the chain was also serving leftover food to customers - for instance, if a customer didn't finish his tempura, the staff would reheat the uneaten pieces and serve them to the next customer in line. By May 2008, the company was out of business.

• **Please record properly! -Matsushita:** Matsushita is an electronics company that swapped to the name Panasonic in 2008. The “record properly” line here is most likely referring to their DIGA series of DVD Recorders which were popular in the mid/late 2000s. Though DVD Recorders never really caught on in the US, in Japan, they were a common replacement for VCRs when it came to recording TV shows and movies.

• **Let Anisong Trance get banned!!:** Speed Anime Trance is a series of music CDs featuring songs from various anime shows. “Speed Anime Trance Best 2”, which was released in 2007, featured “Hito to shite Jiku ga Bureteiru”, the opening song to season 1 of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei.

• **I hope I can steal the sun -Sawada:** The 1979 movie The Man Who Stole the Sun is a satirical spy film starring Kenji Sawada. Sawada's character isn't after the actual sun; instead, he's trying to build two atomic bombs and use them as leverage to force the government to submit to his demands. (His demands, by the way, include showing a baseball game without commercials, and letting the Rolling Stones hold a concert in Japan.)

• **Please don't question me m(\_ \_)m -Torii:** Miyuki Torii is a stand-up comedian who first rose to fame in October 2007 after appearing on a show called Addicted to Cheating. The show initially starred a comedy duo, but eventually one of the comedians fell ill. The show then changed to an interview-type format, where potential replacement comedians would come and answer questions in front of judges. Miyuki appeared on the show with wild eyes and disheveled hair, and her performance was so off-the-wall that the public (especially the internet) fell in love with her at once.

• **I'm hoping for a live-action Wing-Man! -Hirono:** The 1983 manga Wing-Man was about a boy named Kenta Hirono, who loved superheroes so much that he made his own costume and lived out his hero fantasies at school. It seems this is Kenta's wish for a live-action adaptation that has yet to happen. (Though there was a 47-episode anime version of Wing-Man that released in 1984!)

• **May all future episodes be based on easy-to-animate chapters~ -The staff:** It would be easy to say that this is the SHAFT animators hoping to take it easy for the rest of Zetsubou-sensei... but honestly, this could be any animator's wish when it comes to the manga projects they're given.

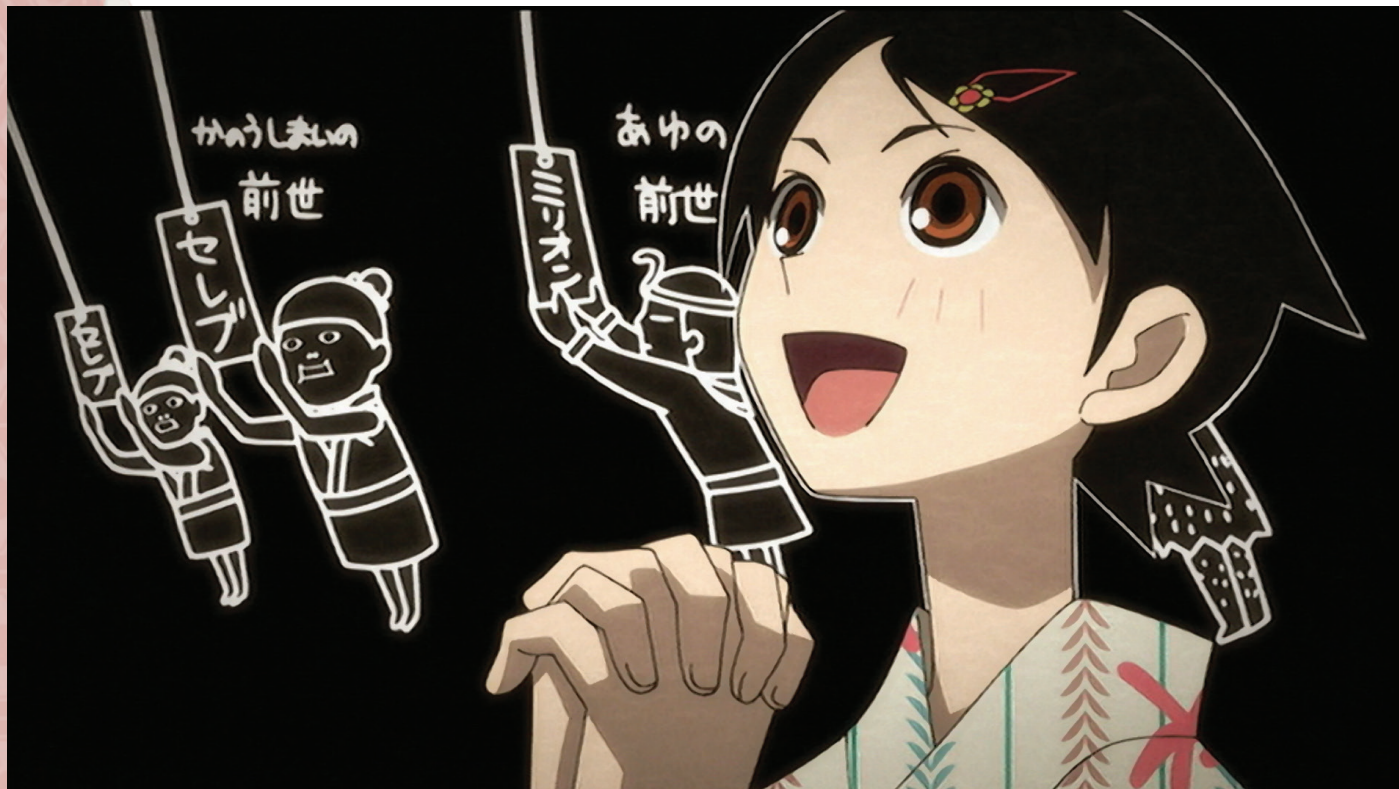




## DR. POTKIN

“Ichiro” is referring to the baseball player Ichiro Suzuki. And apparently, in a past life, he was Peter Kropotkin, the Russian anarchist who was born into an aristocratic family, got sent to prison in 1874, then escaped and lived in exile for 41 years.

**"THAT MEANS ALL SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MAKING WISHES FOR MANY LIFETIMES!"**



When Kafuka says this, we see three example pictures scrolling behind her. They're:

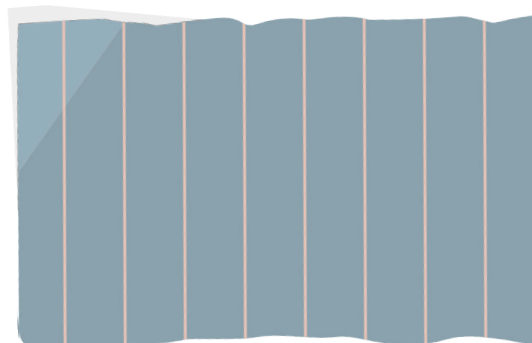
- **Horiemon wishing for money:** Takafumi Horie, the founder of Livedoor, had a nickname: Horiemon. It's a combination of “Horie” and “Doraemon”, the blue cartoon cat. This Tanabata wish for money is apparently what led him to go into IT and earn millions. (Though he surely never wished to be arrested for securities fraud in 2006.)

- **Ayu wishing to go platinum:** Ayumi Hamasaki is a singer/songwriter whose star was certainly rising in the 2000s. She had five platinum albums in a row: Secret (2006), Guilty (2008), Next Level (2009), Rock n' Roll Circus (2010), and Love Songs (2010).

- **The Kano Sisters wishing for a glitzy lifestyle:** The Kano Sisters, as mentioned in a previous liner note, are glitterati. In other words, they aren't popular for any specific talent, but simply because they're wealthy and attractive. Guess this wish worked, too!

## **"HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, SLEEPYHEAD?"**

Matoi's desperate plea to Nozomu is a spoof on a famous tanka poem. The poem was written by Akiko Usano in 1901, and is part of her anthology Tangled Hair.



**"OJAGA JAGA JAGA! OJAGA POND!"**



There's a popular comedy manga from 1979 called *Ojamanga Yamada-kun*, which was turned into an equally-popular anime in 1980. In the show, when a title card for an episode appears, there are three little bugs who sing "Ojama-jama, Ojamanga!" in high-pitched voices.

This is a play on that, but with the name "Ojamanga" swapped out for "Ojaga Ike", which means "Ojaga Pond". Ojaga Pond is a scenic reservoir in Chiba that's been around since the early 1600s.

## **MAY THIS MOON ON THIS NIGHT OF THIS MONTH BE CLOUDED BY MY TEARS**

This episode title is a twist on a line from Ozaki Kouyou's novel *The Golden Demon*. The original is, "Next year, the moon on this night of this month will surely be cloud-ed by my tears."

## **TO BE A SHELLFISH IN MY NEXT LIFE**

The obvious joke here is that pistachios and shellfish are both always enclosed, which sounds great to Kiri. However, *I Want to Be a Shellfish* is also the name of a 1958 TV series, which was adapted into a movie in 2008. It's the story of a soldier in World War II who reluctantly follows the orders he's given. But then, after the war, he's charged with war crimes and sentenced to death. Before his execution, he leaves behind a note saying that "If I must be reborn, I want to live deep under the sea, where there is no war and no soldiers... No worrying about my family... I want to be a shellfish."

## **RA-SHOW-MON**

The next episode preview here is a play on *Rashomon*, a short story written by Ryunosuke Akutagawa in 1915. It's about an unemployed servant who has to decide whether to become a thief or starve to death. In the end, his moral dilemma revolves around an old woman's robe... not a group of young women's underwear.



# EPISODE 12

## **"NO PRESSURE" MEANS NOT WORKING TOO HARD**

This slogan was used in commercials for ORIX's VIP Loan Card. ORIX is a financial services group, and their Loan Cards (which they still offer as of this writing) are a cross between a credit card and a personal loan.

The joke here is that "no pressure" ("yutori") is the same word that's used in "Yutori Education", the relaxing of educational standards that's been mentioned in previous liner notes.

## **AMANOJAKU**

Ai Nonaka, the voice actress who plays Kafuka, is also a singer. On March 12th, just ten days before this episode aired, she released an album called *Namida no Kiseki* ("The Miracle of Tears"), and the third song on the album was called Amanojaku.

## **YATTER RYOUKO-RIN**

Around the same time as Ai Nonaka's CD release, Ryouko Shintani, the voice actress who plays Nami, appeared on *Yattermen!*, the 2008 remake of the 1977 anime *Yatterman!* She played a cute idol girl named Youko-run.

## **44 CDS?! OF COURSE I'LL BUY THEM**

On February 27th, 2008, the pop idol group AKB48 released a single called "Sakura no Hanabiratachi 2008" ("Cherry Blossom Petals 2008"). A special release-day promotion was held at the AKB48 Theater in Akihabara: fans could purchase the CD and also receive a random poster. There were 44 posters in all, and any fan who collected all 44 posters would get access to a special event with the girls. However, this meant that anyone who wanted a ticket to the special event would have to buy at least 44 CDs, to get one of each poster.

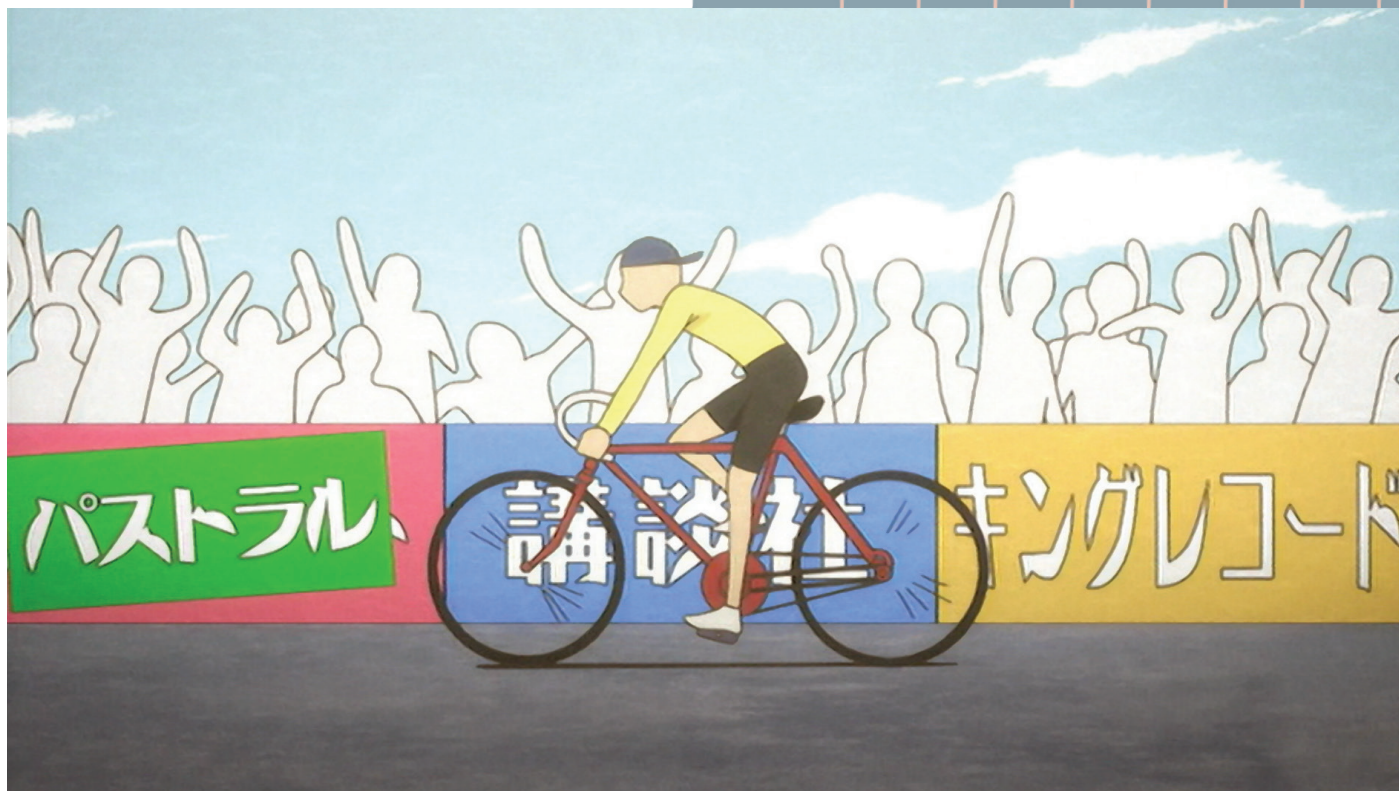
Not only was this incredibly predatory, it was also illegal. It violated Article 19 of Japan's Antimonopoly Act, and risked drawing the ire of Japan's Fair Trade Commission. The very next day, the record label announced that the special event was cancelled and that fans could refund any extra CDs they had purchased.

## **WE LOVED YOUR WORK IN MR. BOO ;\_;**

"Mr. Boo" is the Japanese name for a 1976 Hong Kong comedy called *The Private Eyes*. It starred Hong Kong comedian Michael Hui, but in Japan, his voice was dubbed over by voice actor Taichirou Hirokawa. Taichirou was a prolific voice actor, specializing in dubbing live-action content. He was the Japanese voice for Adam West in the 1960s *Batman* TV series, Dan Akroyd

in the Ghostbusters movies, Roger Moore in the 007 films, and much more. Sadly, Taichirou passed away on March 3rd, 2008, and so this is a farewell message to him from the staff.

## CORPORATE SPONSORS



In the background of Nozomu's bicycling example, there are signboards separating the audience from the street. They all say "Kodansha", "SHAFT", or "King Records"... All except one, which has a giant green sticker on it saying "Pastoral".

These are all names of companies involved with Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. The manga ran in Kodansha's Weekly Shounen Magazine, the anime was produced by SHAFT, and King Records is in charge of music and CD distribution. As for "Pastoral", that's Studio Pastoral, an animation studio that was hired on to help with production. In fact, this is one of the episodes they worked on.

## GO AHEAD

The words on the author's shirt, in Japanese, are "Go mae e!" This is a line from the song "GO MY WAY!!" from the pop-idol game series The IDOLM@STER. (And "the author" is, of course, Kouji Kumeta. Guess he's an IDOLM@STER fan!)

## TAKE IT EASY!

In Japanese, this is "Yukkuri shiteitte ne," which is the text from a famous 2chan meme from 2007. It all started when someone wanted to make an ASCII art picture of Reimu Hakurei and Marisa Kirisame from Touhou Project saying this phrase. However, for whatever reason, the art didn't come out quite right, and the two girls' heads looked overly round, with ridiculous expressions on their faces. The image quickly became a running joke, which then spread over to 4chan, and the rest was Internet history.



## ARE YOU LISTENING?



Nozomu isn't sure if anyone's paying attention, since the whole class seems to be reading books. These are the titles we can see:

- Haga is reading Penguin Club, the adult manga anthology mentioned in a previous liner note.
- Harumi is reading a doujinshi titled "Mae x Bou". It's a pairing of Maeda-Kun and Nozomu (the "bou" is the second kanji in "zetsubou"). The book's cover says that it was drawn by "Arima", meaning Keitarou Arima, the manga artist who created Tsukuyomi: Moon Phase. He drew the end card for episode 10, which was a detailed drawing of Harumi imagining this very pairing.
- Jun is reading a book that says Osamu on the cover. So it's most likely something by Osamu Dazai, the Japanese novelist who wrote Run, Melos, No Longer Human, and many other stories.
- Manami is reading... her bank book.

## SNAZZY SHIRTS



It seems like Kuniya, Haga, and Aoyama are still rocking the “t-shirts over uniforms” look from episode 10.

Kuniya’s shirt says “Union”, referring to the anime series Genesis of Aquarion. Kuniya’s voice actor, Takuma Terashima, also played a red-haired pilot named Apollo in Aquarion. And “uniting” (“gattai”) was a big theme in that show, both for its robots and its human characters.

Aoyama’s shirt says “Hachijou-jima Kyon”. Aoyama’s voice actor, Tomokazu Sugita, also played Kyon, the protagonist of The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya. But as Haruhi fans might know, “Kyon” isn’t the character’s true name. It’s a nickname given to him by his aunt. In real life, “kyon” is the Japanese name for a species of deer called Reeves’ Muntjac. They’re found mostly in China, but they can also be found on Hachijou-jima, an island about 200 miles south of Tokyo.

And Haga’s shirt says “Paid a lot of taxes”. This is a reference to Dragonball creator Akira Toriyama, who lives in Aichi Prefecture. According to an urban legend, when Dragonball’s popularity was at its height, Toriyama was thinking of moving out of Aichi so that he could be closer to the Shounen Jump offices. But the local government was so panicked about losing his incredibly high tax income, that they built a road specifically for him so that he could more easily get his manuscripts to Tokyo! (Like most urban legends, this story is false. But the idea has endured over the years.)

## **MY NAME IS YOKO TANAKA!**

Yoko Tanaka is a character from Kouji Kumeta’s previous manga, Katte ni Kaizou. In that series, she gets buried in a wall. Then, seven years later, in chapter 129 of the Zetsubou-sensei manga, she pops back out of the wall. When she does, her hand is raised (just like the students in this shot of the anime), and she declares, “My name is Yoko Tanaka!”

Not coincidentally, there are some extra students in this shot, as well. On the back left there’s Kouji Kumeta. Next to him is Kaizou Katsu, the main character of Katte ni Kaizou. And Kaizou’s underling Chitan Tsubochi is hiding in the middle back row.

And last but not least, Harumi is reading a copy of BL Magazine Dragon, just like she was in Zetsubou-sensei chapter 129. This is a spoof on Dragon Magazine, the real-life manga magazine that’s been running since 1988. (Though it doesn’t have a “boys’ love” version.)

## **ABOUT THAT HUMAN RIGHTS BILL...**

In 2002, Japan’s Ministry of Justice presented a new Human Rights Protection Bill to the Diet. They proposed creating a Human Rights Commission that would investigate any alleged abuse or discrimination, and then help provide counsel, mediation, or litigation.

Opposition to the bill sprang up almost immediately, with three major counterarguments. The first was that the Human Rights Commission would be part of the Ministry of Justice - but the Ministry of Justice is also in charge of prisons and detention centers. If any human rights violations were reported in those places, there would suddenly be a conflict of interest.

The second complaint came from the media. Part of the proposed bill stated that “journalists may not stalk, lie in wait, block, or repeatedly phone a person connected to an investigation, nor can they unreasonably report on the facts of someone’s private life.” The ambiguity of this wording meant that reporters were worried about restrictions on their ability to run a story.





Last but not least, the third issue was that the bill allowed for “qualified people with high moral integrity, and the appropriate experience in law or society, to serve on an individual commission.” This included foreign nationals. Considering Japan’s strained relationships with its neighbors, this was enough for the Liberal Democratic Party to refuse to endorse the bill, fearing that foreign commissioners might “give preferential treatment” to citizens of other countries.

Though the bill failed to pass, it was brought up again several times, including in late 2007 after Shinzo Abe’s resignation.

## **SPECIAL EDITION**

Speaking of politicians, the man in the chair is Tarou Asou, the manga-loving statesman. One side of his book says “Jump” (as in Shounen Jump), and the other says “Yutori Education”.

## **WHAT IS TRULY HORRIFYING IS MY OWN WEAKNESS.**

This is a play on a line from the Super Famicom RPG Dragon Quest VI. If you visit the soldier training room in Grace Castle (changed to “Castle Graceskull” in the English version), the king has left a note on the wall that says “The only truly horrifying thing is one’s own weakness.”

## **1) THE SOUTH 2) PARADISE 3) POKA POKA 4) TSUBOUCHI 5) SISTER 6) WITH YOU**

The first five bits of this Lupin-style text are all references to other manga titles created by Kouji Kumeta. They’re:

- Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club
- √P Root Paradise
- The Sun’s Soldier Poka Poka
- Katte ni Kaizou
- My Big Sister is Always Picking a Fight

As for the last one, “With You”, it’s part of the tagline for the anime series Genesis of Aquarion: “I want to unite with you.”

## **THE LANDINGS OF VIRTUE**

This episode title is a play on The Misfortunes of Virtue, a 1791 novel written by the Marquis de Sade.

Also, the plane’s left wing says “Z-2”, while the right one says “BOW”. In Japanese, the English letter “z” is pronounced “zett”, and the English word “two” is pronounced “tsuu”. Put it all together, and you get “zett tsuu bow”, or “zetsubou”.

## **DANKAI TRADING**

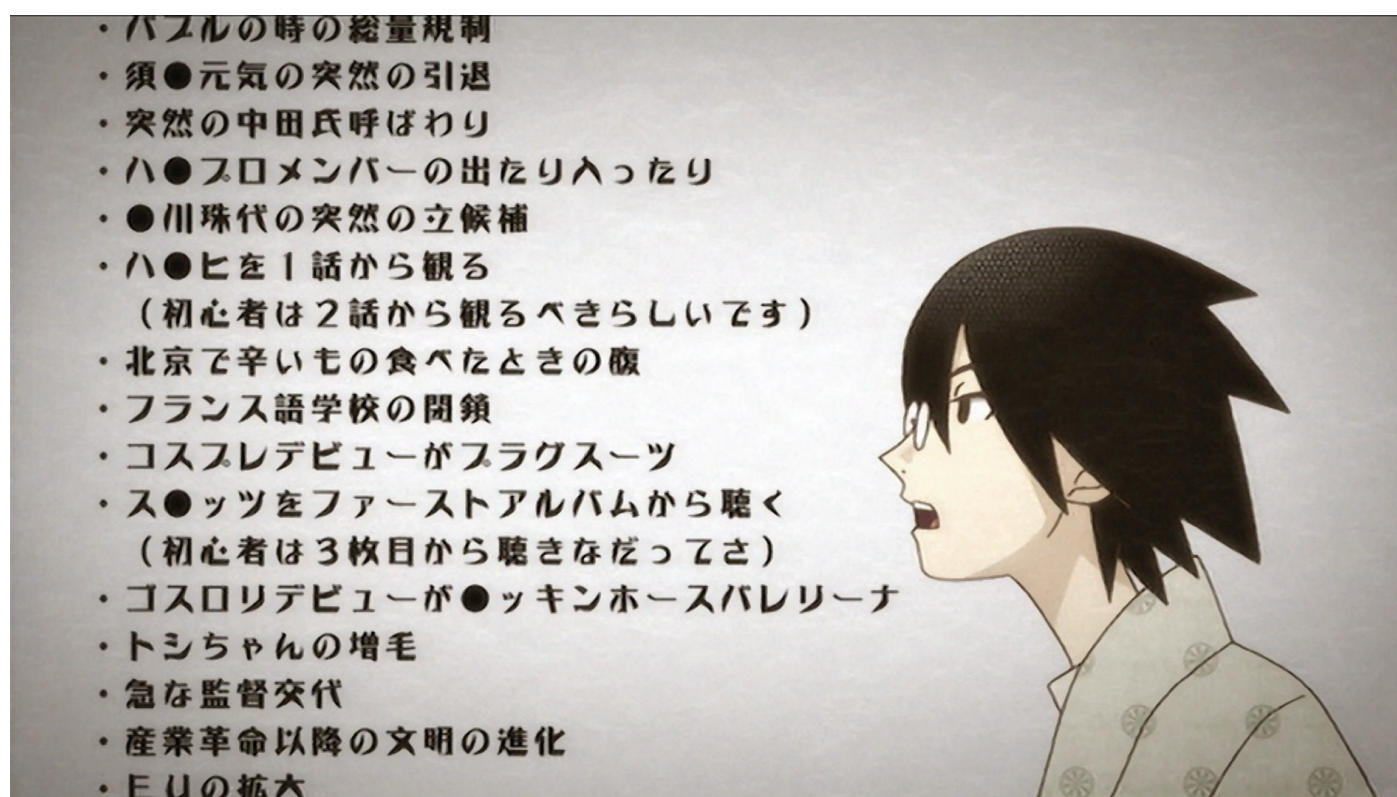
“Dankai” is the Japanese word for “baby boomer” - a.k.a., someone born right after the end of World War II.

## **“AVOID HARD LANDINGS AT ALL COSTS!”**

A huge list of “hard landings” starts scrolling up the screen behind Nozomu as he says this. Let’s take a closer look:

- **Total loan amount restrictions in the Bubble Era:** Japan’s bubble economy started in the

mid-80s, and by 1990, real estate prices were greatly inflated beyond their actual worth. This meant that homeowners and real estate companies could take out bigger loans, using the over-inflated value of their land as collateral. But conversely, it also meant that buying a home became almost impossible, due to the over-inflated value of land. In an attempt to bring land prices back under control, in March of 1990, the Ministry of Finance issued guidelines that limited the total loan amounts that banks could lend to the real estate sector. That did succeed in bringing down land prices, but as a consequence, it also reduced the value of banks' equity holdings. (For example, if someone took out a \$90,000 loan using their \$100,000 house as collateral, even if they defaulted on their loan, the bank could still have recovered its money. However, if the house value went down to \$50,000 after the fall in real estate prices, the bank is suddenly out \$40,000 if the borrower defaults.) Things collapsed quickly after that. The decline in equity holdings began to put pressure on bank capital. Companies no longer had the economic leverage they did before, which meant abandoning expansion projects and worse, enormous hiring freezes. Lower wages and fewer job opportunities meant people had a harder time making ends meet. Thus the economic bubble popped. Essentially, the loan amount restrictions were both too late (they should have happened years sooner), and too quick (pulling the rug out from under the system led to a "hard landing").



• **Su\*\*\* Genki's sudden retirement:** The censored name is meant to be Genki Sudou, a Japanese mixed martial arts fighter. He was a strong fighter with a good record, but on December 31st 2006, after defeating Damacio Page at K-1 Dynamite, he immediately announced his retirement. It was a shock to everyone, but Genki said that he had a revelation while using the restroom. "When I went to the bathroom," he said, "there was a sign on the wall right in front of me saying: ONE STEP FORWARD. I felt I needed to start something else." At the time this Zetsubou-sensei story was written, Genki had yet to start anything else. Eventually, in 2008, he started to work again, as the manager of the Takushoku University wrestling team. And as of this writing, he's a politician serving in the Lower House.

• **Mr. Nakata's sudden name change:** Hidetoshi Nakata, the famous soccer player mentioned in previous liner notes, retired from the sport in 2006 at the early age of 29. Before his retirement, the mass media usually referred to him by the nickname "Hide". But after his retirement, many reports about him suddenly became more formal, referring to him as "Mr. Nakata".



• **\*\*Ilo Project member turnover:** The pop girl band Morning Musume has seen a lot of members come and go over the years. But during the “5th Generation” (late 2001 through mid-2003) the roster change was particularly intense. There was a massive reshuffling of talent among Hello! Project bands, and as a result, Morning Musume’s long streak of chart-topping singles was broken. The group’s CDs had been going platinum for years, but starting with the song “Do It! Now” in 2002, they could only reach gold, and continued to go down from there. (Don’t feel too bad, though! The group has seen a bit of a revival since 2012.)

• **\*\*\*\*kawa Tamayo’s sudden candidacy:** After graduating from college in 1993, Tamayo Marukawa joined TV Asahi and became an announcer. And that’s where she stayed for the next 14 years, until Shinzo Abe suddenly asked her to run for the 2007 House of Councillors election. She ended up winning, but you might remember from a previous liner note that it wasn’t a smooth transition.

• **Watching Ha\*\*hi from ep. 1 (Apparently newbies should start with ep.2):** When The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya first aired in 2006, the episodes weren’t shown in chronological order. The “first episode” was actually episode 11. Viewers had to wait another week for the “second episode”, which was the real episode 1. Then the “third episode” was episode 2, the “fourth episode” was episode 7, and so on.

• **Your stomach after eating spicy food in Beijing:** On the whole, Chinese cuisine uses more chili peppers than Japanese food. Unsuspecting tourists can have an intestinal “hard landing” of the worst kind if their stomach is unprepared.

• **French language school closures:** The 2000s were tough for foreign language schools. Previous liner notes have mentioned the implosion of NOVA, an English language school. But in 2006, a French language school called Ecole de Paris closed its doors, as well. It was swift and sudden; teachers were immediately fired and students got a pittance of their paid fees back, if anything at all.

• **Making your cosplay debut in a plug suit:** “Plug suits” are the skin-tight body suits that Eva pilots wear in Neon Genesis Evangelion. If you’re trying to decide how to take your first steps into the world of cosplay, it would be better to start with something a bit less difficult to sew.

• **Listening to Spitz from their first album (Apparently newbies should start with the third):** Spitz is a Japanese rock band that consistently tops the charts with their mellow, melodic pop ballad style. However, when Spitz first they started out, they were a hard rock band. The bulletpoint here says to start with their third album, but even that might be a bit shocking for casual Spitz fans. Starting with their sixth album, Hachimitsu, is probably the safest bet.

• **Making your goth loli debut in rocking horse ballerinas:** “Rocking horse ballerina” is a type of shoe from fashion design label Vivienne Westwood. Imagine ballerina shoes, but the soles are enormous blocks of wood that have been rounded on the bottom like the rockers of a rocking chair. Taking your first steps in shoes like that could end up being a literal crash course in fashion.

• **Toshi-chan’s hair plugs:** Toshihiko Tahara is an idol singer who had several hit songs in Japan during the 1980s. At that time, he was in his 20s with a big bushy head of hair. Then he disappeared from the limelight for a couple decades... and by the time he made his return in the late 2000s, people were shocked to see that he had started going bald.

• **Abruptly changing directors:** When *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* first started airing, its director was Yutaka Yamamoto. But then, after episode 4, Yamamoto was suddenly fired and replaced with Yasuhiro Takemoto. The only reason Kyoto Animation gave for the firing was a single vague statement: “Mr. Yamamoto does not yet have what it takes to be a director.”

• **The advancement of civilization post-Industrial Revolution:** Advancements in technology have happened so fast that humanity has struggled to keep pace with them. Things like medicine, food production, and engineering have grown at an astronomical rate... but so have things like consumerism, pollution, and weaponry.

• **Expansion of the EU:** The European Union was officially founded in 1993, with a treaty between 12 nations: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK/Northern Ireland. More countries were gradually added here and there, but 2004 saw an enormous influx of countries when Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia all joined at the same time.

• **Being told of a deadline two hours prior**

• **Politicians getting elected on grandiose promises**

• **Fathers sticking you in a giant robot:** This is a reference to the 1995 anime series *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, where NERV Commander Gendo Ikari tells his son Shinji to get in the robot (more or less). If you’ve seen the show, you know that it doesn’t go too well for Shinji after that.

• **“Zoku” episode 2:** When episode 2 of *Zoku Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei* first aired on TV, all the characters’ lines in Part A (“When You Opened Up Your Bangs for the First Time”) were total gibberish. Everyone was supposedly speaking “Pororokan”, and there were subtitles in Japanese... except the subtitles had nothing to do with the show or what the characters should have been saying. It was a challenging viewing experience, to be sure. When it came time for the DVD release of the show, the gibberish was replaced with a proper audio track.

• **Selling 30,000 copies:** This is one of SHAFT’s recurring sales targets for *Zetsubou-sensei*. As mentioned before, it’s quite a lofty goal.

• **Gyoza made in \*\*\*\*\*:** If you recall from a previous liner note, ten people were hospitalized in early 2008 after eating poisoned gyoza that had been imported from China. That’s a hard landing no one should have to experience!

## RESTRUCTURING AIRPORT

Traditionally in Japan, once you start working for a company, you’re guaranteed employment there for life. This means employees can never be fired... so instead, they get “restructured”.

For instance, the second step in Nozomu’s example is “desk moved next to a window”. While that’s usually seen as a perk in American office culture, in Japanese office culture, it sends a message saying: “Your services are no longer needed, so spend your time looking out the window instead of working.” There’s even a term for folks who find themselves with window seats: *madogiwazoku*. It means “the tribe that sits by the windows”.



## **IF YOU'RE DISMISSED (FIRED) FOR "PERSONAL REASONS" THAT MEANS YOU'RE A "MIS-FIT"**

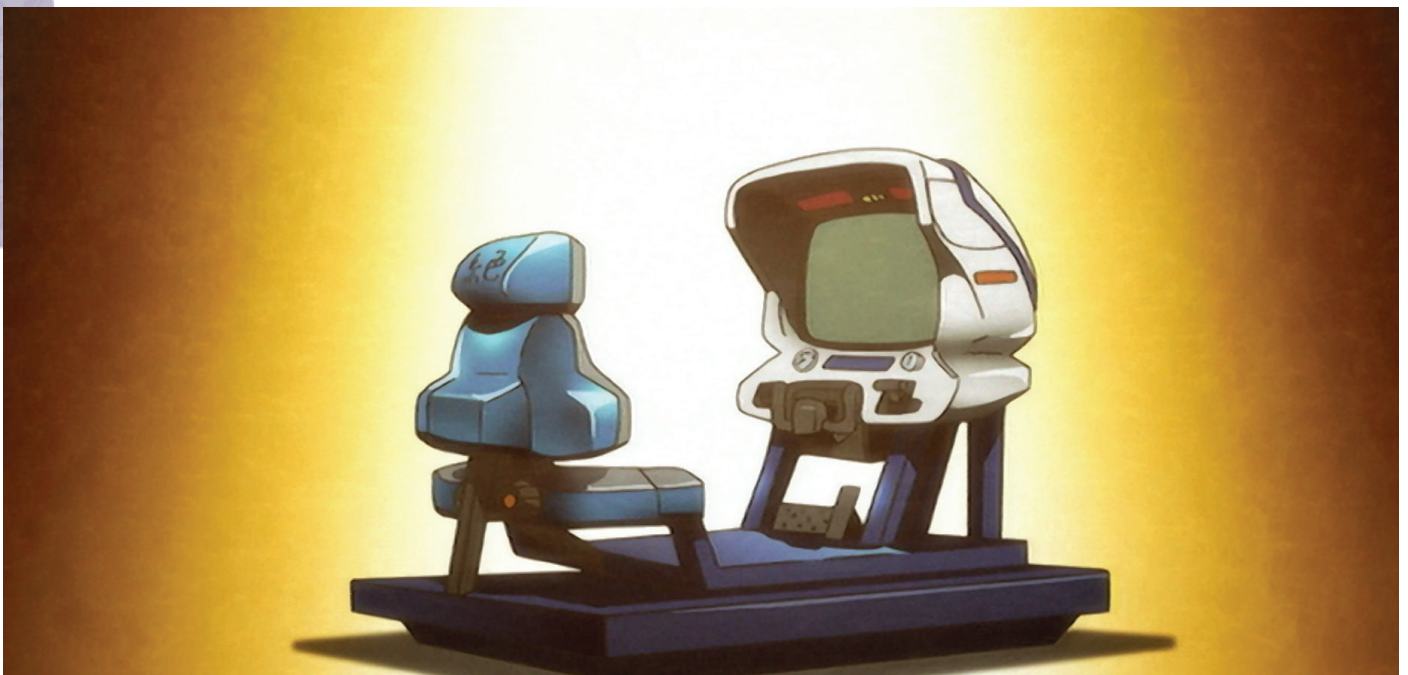
This is another awful kanji joke. The Japanese word for “misfit” is “shakaifutekigous-ha” (社会不適合者), which literally means “someone who is unfit for society”. The first two kanji are the word “society” (社会), but if you swap them, their meaning changes to “company” (会社). And that’s the crux of the joke here - they’ve swapped the first two kanji in “misfit” (社会不適合者) and turned it into “someone who is unfit for a company” (会社不適合者), which isn’t a real word.

So the note on the blackboard says, “If you’re dismissed (fired) for ‘personal reasons’, it means you’re someone who is unfit for a company”.

## **KIBOU HAS GONE TO SPACE**

Kibou, which means “hope”, is the nickname for the Japanese science model on the International Space Station. Its first two pieces were launched into space on March 11th, 2008 (eleven days before this episode aired). It took two more shuttle missions to fully complete the module, but once it was all in place, Kibou became home to a wide variety of medical and scientific experiments.

## **"ON THAT NOTE, I'VE SET UP A LANDING SIMULATOR FOR YOU OVER THERE!"**



Nozomu’s “landing simulator” is a spoof on After Burner, a 1987 arcade game from Sega which let the player control an F-14 Tomcat.

American readers are probably most familiar with the “Deluxe” version of After Burner’s arcade cabinet. It looked like an enclosed cockpit, which would rotate with the movements of the jet on screen. However, Nozomu’s game is modeled after the “Commander” variation of After Burner’s cabinet, which had the pilot seat but was not enclosed. This version was only released in Japan.

## **\*EGA GAMES ARE THE BEST**

The censored name is Sega, the well-known video game company. Also, the specific way this sentence is written (セガのゲームは世界いちいいい) makes it the same as the name of a 1999

comic by Takahiro Yoshimatsu (though he wrote it under the pen name “Something Yoshimatsu”). Yoshimatsu is an animator who’s worked on dozens of big-name titles - everything from Dragon Ball Z to Hunter x Hunter to Trigun, and even Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei.

## **A FAMILIAR SEQUENCE**

When Chiri activates the simulator, it’s a parody of the 1987 mecha series Metal Armor Dragonar. Every movement she makes, from pressing buttons to flipping switches and even her eyes darting around, is the same as the launching sequence that Kaine Wakaba performs in Metal Armor Dragonar’s opening.

## **NO SHOTS ALLOWED!**

This is written like a “No Parking” sign (駐車禁止), but the word “parking” has been swapped out for “injection”, like with a needle (注射禁止). It’s a reference to the dubious shots that Chiri claimed she gave her sister in episode 3.

## **MIYAZAKI A\*I’S WEDDING AIRPORT**

The censored name is Aoi Miyazaki. She married actor Sosuke Takaoka in June 2007, which came as a surprise to many. She has a young face and was known for her “pure and innocent” roles, so no one expected her to get married, even though she was 22 years old at the time.

## **GET F\*IDAY’D, LOSE SOME LUSTER**

One of the steps in Nozomu’s “wedding announcement” plan is “Get Friday’d, lose some luster.” Friday is the name of a Japanese tabloid that publishes celebrity gossip. If they run an article about you, that’s called “getting Friday’d”, and it’s not really something anyone wants.

## **"OTHER AIRPORTS HAVE SOFT-LANDING PROCEDURES..."**

There are a bunch of different “airports” listed on the screen as Nozomu says this, but the airport on the far left isn’t labeled. However, the combination of “missile launch”, “6-party talks”, and “nuclear tests” gives it away: this is the North Korea Airport. The 6-party talks were a series of meetings between six countries - China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, the US, and North Korea - as they attempted to address security concerns over North Korean nuclear weapons after North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003.

## **801?**

It’s come up in several past liner notes that “801” can be read as “yaoi” using goroawase. However, this time, it’s not actually referring to boys’ love! The 801 here is referring to Jun’ichi Yaoi, a Japanese director and TV personality who specialized in shows about UFOs.



## A FAMILIAR SUIT



While Kafuka is rattling off her master plan for integrating aliens into society, there's a quick shot of Nozomu (and Matoi) in a mecha cockpit. Nozomu's purple space suit, with a purple helmet and orange face shield, is a spoof on Tieria Erde's suit from *Mobile Suit Gundam 00*. Nozomu's voice actor, Hiroshi Kamiya, voices Tieria as well.

### **"FIRST, MAKE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE STARTING IN CERTAIN AREAS!"**

The sign on the wall says "51", making this the legendary Area 51. In real life, Area 51 is a highly classified United States Air Force facility in Nevada that works with experimental aircraft and weapons. Starting in the 1950s, several unusual sightings near Area 51 led to speculation and rumors that aliens had crash landed in the desert. Perhaps the Air Force was experimenting on these extraterrestrials and their advanced technology!

Decades later, once documents concerning Area 51 had been declassified, it was revealed that people were most likely seeing tests of U-2 and OXCART aircraft back in the 1950s. But this information was too little too late; Area 51 was already permanently linked with "aliens" in the public imagination.

### **THE MASTER PLAN**

The steps in Kafuka's First Contact plan are all from famous movies and shows. "Worming into powerful business and political positions" is a plot point from John Carpenter's 1988 movie *They Live*. "Turning the locals into ground meat" comes from Peter Jackson's first feature film, *Bad Taste*, which was about aliens who want to use humans as food in their intergalactic fast food franchise. And "shipping them off to Star System 64" is a reference to Leaf 64, a star from the girls-vs.-aliens anime *Gunbuster*.

**"BY TAKING THESE STEPS, THE HUMAN LIVESTOCK PROJECT CAN BE SMOOTHLY ACHIEVED!"**

When the UFO pulls Kafuka up in its giant tractor beam, the background image is a horizontally-flipped version of a woodblock print by the famous ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai. The original print is called "Fine Wind, Clear Morning".

**SUCH THINGS EXIST. NOT AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT OPINION**



You might remember from a previous liner note that in 2007, Ryuji Yamane of the Democratic Party of Japan asked the government if it had ever confirmed the existence of UFOs. Well, he wasn't the only UFO-loving civil servant. Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba also wanted to discuss the topic. "There are debates over what makes UFOs fly," he said, "but it would be difficult to say it's an encroachment of air space." When pressed further, he said, "Personally, I definitely believe UFOs exist."

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, however, made it clear that the government has yet to confirm the existence of aliens.

Also, as a side note, the time in the upper left-hand corner of the TV screen is 1:48. Using go-rawase, this can be pronounced "i-shi-ba", the Defense Minister's last name.

**WHAT'S JUN READING NOW?**

As the debate over soft landings rages on, Jun is in the corner of the classroom reading a book with a light blue cover. The text on it says "Southern", referring to Kouji Kumeta's first manga series, Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club.



## HE BLEW ME OFF MAGNIFICENTLY!

In Japanese, this text is “Karei ni suruu dappii!” That last bit, “dappii”, isn’t a real word - it’s the idol girl Youko-run’s catchphrase in the anime series Yattermen! Voice actress Ryouko Shintani plays both Youko-run and Nami.

## IS THIS RIVAL?

Kodansha used to run a monthly magazine called Comic BomBom, which specialized in manga based around games and toys, such as Rockman (Mega Man in the US), Transformers, SD Gundam, and more. It eventually stopped publication in late 2007, but Kodansha launched a new magazine in its place called Monthly Shounen Rival. Where BomBom was mostly aimed towards children, Rival was aimed towards teens and young adults.

In just a couple shot changes, we’ll see Harumi reading a fake version of this magazine, called “Weekly Shounen Rival”.

## GREETINGS, FELLOW STUDENTS

At one point, we’re shown Ai standing near her shoe locker. But the name tags on the other lockers are all a little suspicious.

In the first shot, the locker to the left of Ai’s is marked “Fukuda” (as in former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda), and the locker to the left is marked “Abe” (as in former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe).

Then, in the second shot, there are lockers for “Shinbo” (Akiyuki Shinbo, the director of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei), “Emperor” (the Emperor Penguin, that odd recurring yin-yang symbol), “Akamatsu” (Ken Akamatsu, the author of Love Hina and Negima!), and “Asou” (former Prime Minister Tarou Asou). In fact, other than Ai, the only other actual student who has a locker on this shelf is Jun Kudou.

## BETA HAS BEEN VINDICATED

Back in the 1980s, there was a home video format war between JVC’s VHS and Sony’s Betamax. VHS won that war, with Sony conceding defeat in 1988.

However, in the early 2000s, there was another home video format war. This time, the battle was between Sony’s Blu-ray and Toshiba’s HD DVD. In February 2008, the war came to an end - HD DVD was defeated, and Sony’s Blu-ray became the standard. In a way, one could say that the Beta format (which some people preferred) had finally been vindicated.

## HEAVENLY CONDITION!!

Namco Bandai released a Nintendo DS game called Duel Love in 2008. It was the story of a girl who befriended the boys in her high school’s Boxing Club, and then assisted them by cheering them on during their bouts, treating their injuries, and, uh... (\*checks notes\*) wiping the sweat off their naked bodies. The player would use the stylus to rub a little cloth over a completely nude boy (with his genitals hidden by the gap between the system’s top and bottom screens), and then the boy would react in different ways. If the minigame was done perfectly, he would have a “very contented” look on his face, while the background sparkled and glowed in rainbow colors. This was called “Heavenly Condition”.

Of course, it didn’t take the Internet long to pick up on this and run with it. Memes spread like wildfire, and the game gained much more attention than it might have otherwise.

## IT'S A WASTE TO PRINT SO MANY POSTERS

In February of 2008, the Tohoku Agricultural Administration Bureau printed over 30,000 posters, which were covered in big yellow text that said, “It’s a waste to grow so much rice!” The posters were then hung at agricultural organizations all around the region.

There were several reasons behind this. One is that Japan has a rice surplus, which means that an enormous amount of rice goes to waste each year. The other is that Japan also has a food self-sufficiency problem: the country imports well over half of the food they consume. To put it another way, if imports were no longer an option, Japan would only be able to grow about 40% of the food they need to survive. The solution, then - at least, according to the Tohoku government - was to convert excess rice farms into wheat or soybean farms, in order to help boost food self-sufficiency.

However, the actual farmers in the field did not take kindly to this messaging. The Tohoku Agricultural Farmer’s Association, a collective of around 6,000 farmers in the Tohoku region, lodged a written complaint against the campaign. They responded by saying that Japan’s rice production had actually already been decreasing year over year - in fact, the actual cause of Japan’s rice surplus was excessive rice importing, combined with decreasing rice consumption. Furthermore, they argued that the rice paddies in Tohoku weren’t there just for the sake of growing rice. They also helped with water management and were a support system for local wildlife.

All in all, the posters cost about \$4000 to print. It seems like the money might have gone to better use elsewhere.

## (TRY NOT TO WATCH) ANIME UNTIL MORNING



This “show” is a spoof on a long-running political debate show called Asamade Nama TV (“Live TV Until Morning”). It airs late at night (or early in the morning, depending on your perspective), from 1:25 AM to 4:25 AM.

The topic of discussion is “Domestic Production”. If this were an actual episode of Asamade Nama TV, the guests would be discussing “food production” and Japan’s import problems. However, here on Zetsubou-sensei, everyone is discussing “anime production” instead.



## A CLASSIC FIT

Maeda-kun is wearing a green t-shirt that says Dokuritsu Gurentai (“Independent Gang”). It’s the name of a 1959 film about a war correspondent who visits a group of soldiers at the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The movie was so popular that it got a sequel, and was eventually serialized.

## ORIGINAL IDEA, DO NOT STEAL

All of the suggestions for new titles are summaries of manga that Kouji Kumeta has already written. Kiri is describing Katte ni Kaizou, Matoi is describing Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club, and Meru is describing My Big Sister is Always Picking a Fight.

## SHALL YOU GIVE ME DESPAIR?

Twist this sentence around, and you get Sephiroth’s famous line - “Shall I give you despair?” - from the 2005 movie Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children.

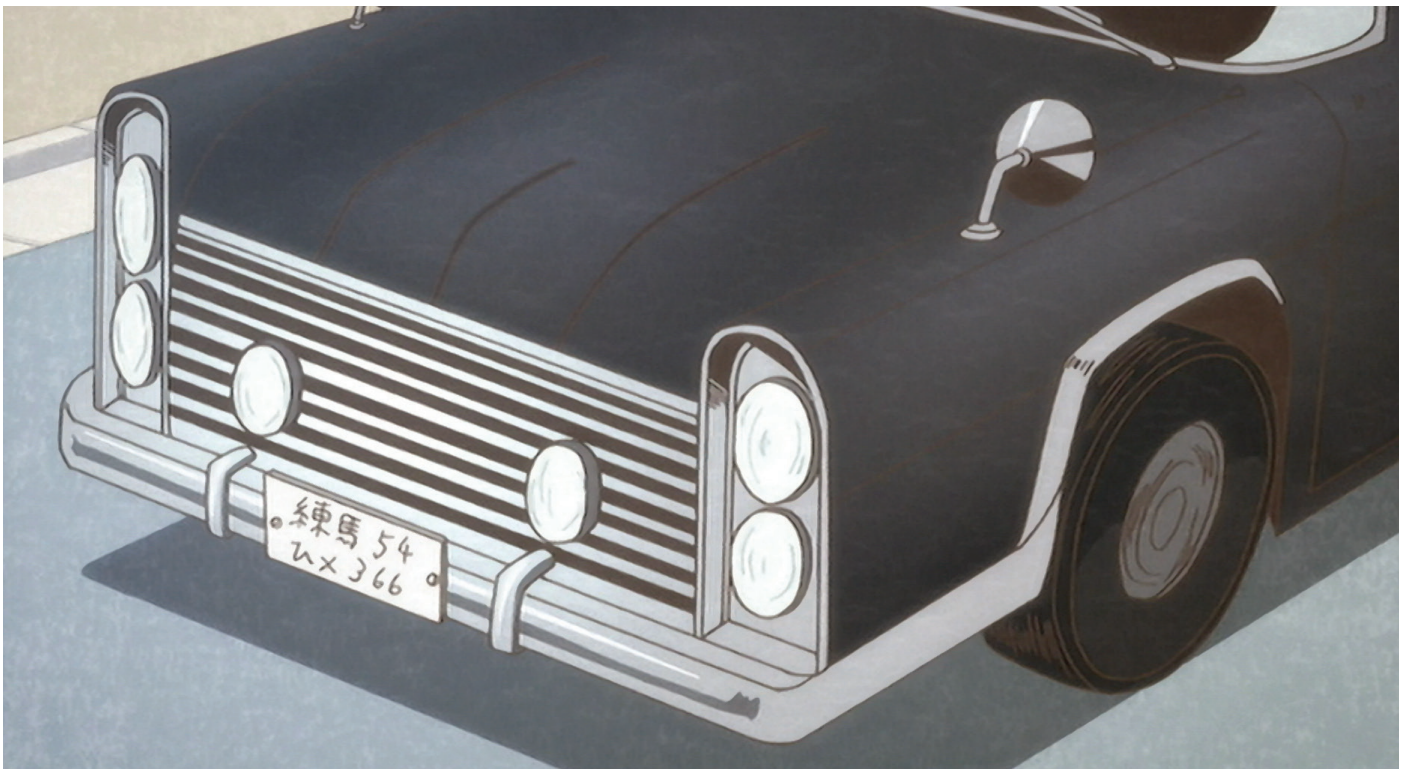
## NAMI SURE IS PRETTY IN PROFILE

This is a line from the Super Famicom game Otogirisou. “Otogirisou” is the Japanese name for the flower St. John’s wort, and the sprig of it that we see on-screen is almost an exact copy of a scene from the game itself. Otogirisou is a horror game, and one of the very first games in a genre that would later be called “visual novels”.

## THE SPLOTCHY LOGO

This creepy Zetsubou-sensei logo is almost identical in style to the logo for Otogirisou.

## OFFICIALLY LICENSED



When Nozomu hails a taxi, we get a brief look at its license plate.

The top line on a Japanese license plate indicates the prefecture where the car is registered (in this case, Nerima), and then a number denoting the vehicle’s class. The number here is 54, which technically means it’s a passenger car... but the two-digit class number system was discontinued back in 1999. Plates since then have used a three-digit system.

The bottom line is the part of the license that's unique to each plate. It normally consists of a small hiragana letter, followed by two numbers, a dash, and two more numbers. On this taxi's plate, the license number is: Hi x 366. That's not a standard plate number, of course - it's a reference to Hidamari Sketch x 365. The number is "366" because 2008 was a leap year, which meant it had 366 days instead of 365.

### **DRIVER HAS AN F1 LICENSE. -MSC**

"MSC" here stands for Michael Schumacher, the German Formula One driver. He was incredibly popular in Japan, and his many World Championships earned him the nickname "the Emperor of Formula One". In December of 2007, Schumacher and his family were taking a taxi to the airport, but they were running late, so Schumacher politely asked if he could take over driving. The cabbie was confused but accepted, and suddenly they were off, flying down the road and going full throttle around corners. The taxi driver, a man named Tuncer Yilmaz, loved every minute of it. "It was the best thing that ever happened", he said. "It was better than winning the lottery."

### **GOING FOR BROKE**

The fare for Nozomu's cab ride is 128,200 yen, or about \$1282. Ouch!

### **IT'S HER BIRTHDAY**

This "movie" has two main stars listed in its credits: Aika Mitsui, and Mitsuo Terada.

In the movie Aika was the birthday girl, but in real life, Aika is a former member of Morning Musume. She was chosen to be part of the group in 2006, at the age of 13.

Mitsuo Terada, meanwhile, is Tsunku's real name. If you recall, he was Morning Musume's manager until he stepped down in 2014.

### **SAVE ME! HIT RESET... PRESS SELECT...**

The Lupin-style text here is from another early Super Famicom visual novel, Kamaitachi no Yoru ("Night of the Kamaitachi"). In one of the game's many endings, if you look at each horizontal line and read the third letter of each sentence vertically, you'll see the message: "Save me! Hit reset..." If you then reset the console, the game won't load like it normally does. Instead, you'll be presented with a black screen, and a message from the writer of the game saying that he's being held captive. He claims that Chunsoft (the game's publisher) wants to control the world, and will hunt down anyone who finds his secret warning. At the very end of the desperate note, the writer pleads for the reader to hide, and says, "Hurry, I hear their footsteps...!"

Kamaitachi no Yoru was eventually ported to the PlayStation and the Game Boy Advance. In both of those versions, instead of "Hit reset", the message was changed to "Press select".

As for "Combine", this is another Genesis of Aquarion reference. In Japanese the word is "gattai", which can also mean "unite", as in the Aquarion tagline "I want to unite with you".

### **A CERTAIN WOMAN'S ROLE**

This episode title is a spoof on Takeo Arishima's 1919 novel, A Certain Woman.

### **MEIOU PLAZA HOTEL**

Keio Plaza Hotel is a chain of luxury hotels in Japan, with their most famous location being a two-towered skyscraper hotel in Shinjuku.

Here in Zetsubou-sensei, though, "Keio" has been swapped out for "Meiou", which means "Hades".



## **THIS ISN'T A CELEBRATION OF NEW ADULTS, BUT OF NEW INFANTS**

All the fuss over congratulating new adults is based on a real thing. Coming of Age Day is a public holiday in Japan, held on the second Monday of every January. 20-year-olds across the country attend Coming of Age ceremonies and hold parties with their families and friends.

However, in recent years, attendance at these ceremonies has decreased, or worse, the ceremony itself has broken out into chaos. In 2001, a group of young adults started throwing crackers at the Mayor of Takamatsu City, who was giving the congratulatory speech. In 2008, a young man got incredibly drunk and started vandalizing taxis. In 2010, a bunch of young adults interrupted their ceremony by climbing all over the stage while running around and yelling.

This particular quote is from a Coming of Age ceremony held in Sendai in 1999. The Egyptologist Sakuji Yoshimura had been invited to come give the congratulatory address, but the young adults in the audience were behaving rudely, talking during his speech, and just generally not paying attention. So Yoshimura actually stopped his talk halfway through, said “This isn’t a celebration of new adults, but of new infants”, and left the stage altogether.

## **WHEN BOYS BECOME MEN, THEY GROW OUT THEIR HAIR**

As mentioned in the previous liner note, Sakuji Yoshimura is an Egyptologist. And in early Egyptian culture, long hair and thick beards represented maturity, fertility, and manliness. So perhaps Yoshimura would consider this a better measure of adulthood!

## **HOMEMADE RAGS**

There’s a joke hidden in here. The kanji for “rags” on this sign don’t actually form a real word. They’re 垢 and 服, the kanji for “dirty” and “clothes”, which can be read as “aka” and “fuku”. This is a play on Akafuku, a real-life sweets manufacturer. As mentioned in a previous liner note, they’re one of the many food companies that were caught falsifying their “best before” dates in 2007.

## **BIG BROTHER, YOUR SCARF IS CROOKED.**

In the first episode of the 2004 anime series *Maria Watches Over Us*, there’s a scene where Sachiko, a prim and elegant upperclassman, approaches Yumi, a wide-eyed freshman, and tells her that her scarf is crooked. Sachiko then gently adjusts Yumi’s scarf. Nozomu is having a similar experience, but with a lot more violence involved.

## **BAD MEDICINE**

When the hot-headed man crashes into a bunch of boxes outside the drug store, products scatter all over the ground. Among them are bottles of dichlorvos and methamidophos - but those are highly toxic insecticides which were used to poison the Chinese gyoza that sent ten Japanese people to the hospital (as mentioned in previous liner notes). So shopping at this particular pharmacy might be a bad idea.

## MOVIE POSTERS



As Nozomu runs out of the movie theater, there are two posters on the wall outside. One of them says “Touching moments are being stolen”, the unnerving anti-piracy slogan mentioned in previous liner notes. But if you look a little farther to the right, you can see a picture of someone in black shorts striking an odd pose. This is Mai from the visual novel Popotan, but more specifically, this is her pose in the famous Internet meme Caramelldansen. Though the meme has seen hundreds of variations over the years, it all started in 2005 when a 4chan user named “Sven from Sweden” took a clip from Popotan of Mai and her sister Mei dancing, and paired it with a sped-up version of the song “Caramelldansen” by Swedish group Caramell. It quickly spread worldwide.

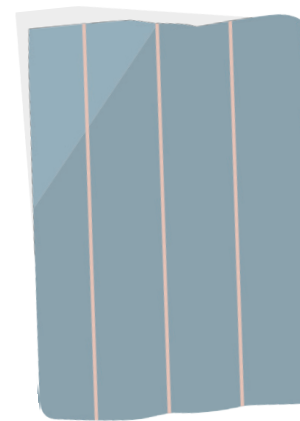
## PACKING ONLY THE ESSENTIALS

When Nozomu moves into his new home, one of his boxes of belongings is marked “Root P.” This is short for Root Paradise, one of Kouji Kumeta’s earlier manga projects.

## “OZAKI DIED HERE.”

Yutaka Ozaki was an extremely popular musician who got his big break in 1983, while he was still in high school. However, by the time he was 20 years old, he started to lose his way. He was having trouble writing songs, he was arrested for drug possession, and he collapsed during a tour, causing the rest of the shows to be cancelled. Finally, in 1992, he was discovered unconscious in a private garden about 500 yards from his apartment in Adachi. He was naked and covered in bruises, and though he was taken to the hospital, he sadly ended up dying later that day. There are many theories and rumors surrounding his death; people have called it everything from a drug overdose to suicide to a yakuza hit. But in truth, no one really knows.

When this episode of Zetsubou-sensei aired, the house where Ozaki collapsed really was open to the public. Since fans came to the house every day in tears, the owners were kind enough to open up a room on their first floor where people could gather and remember him. The place eventually came to be known as the “Ozaki House”. However, time moves on, and it was eventually closed in late 2011.





## GREATEST HITS

Two strings of text show up on screen in quick succession: “Oh my little girl”, and “My tears start to flow, and I lose myself in your love”. These are both lyrics from Yutaka Ozaki songs. The first is from his single “Oh My Little Girl”, which was released posthumously in 1994. And the second is from “Reason”, a song from his 1988 album *Trees Along the Road*.

### "HE WAS JAPAN'S JAMES DEAN!"

The title of “Japan’s James Dean” is usually reserved for Keiichirou Akagi, a handsome young actor in the late 1950s who had a bright career, but tragically passed away after a car crash at the age of 21. However, Yutaka Ozaki could fit the bill as well. Just like the famous American actor, Ozaki was also a cultural icon among teenagers, often wore blue jeans, and died at a very young age.

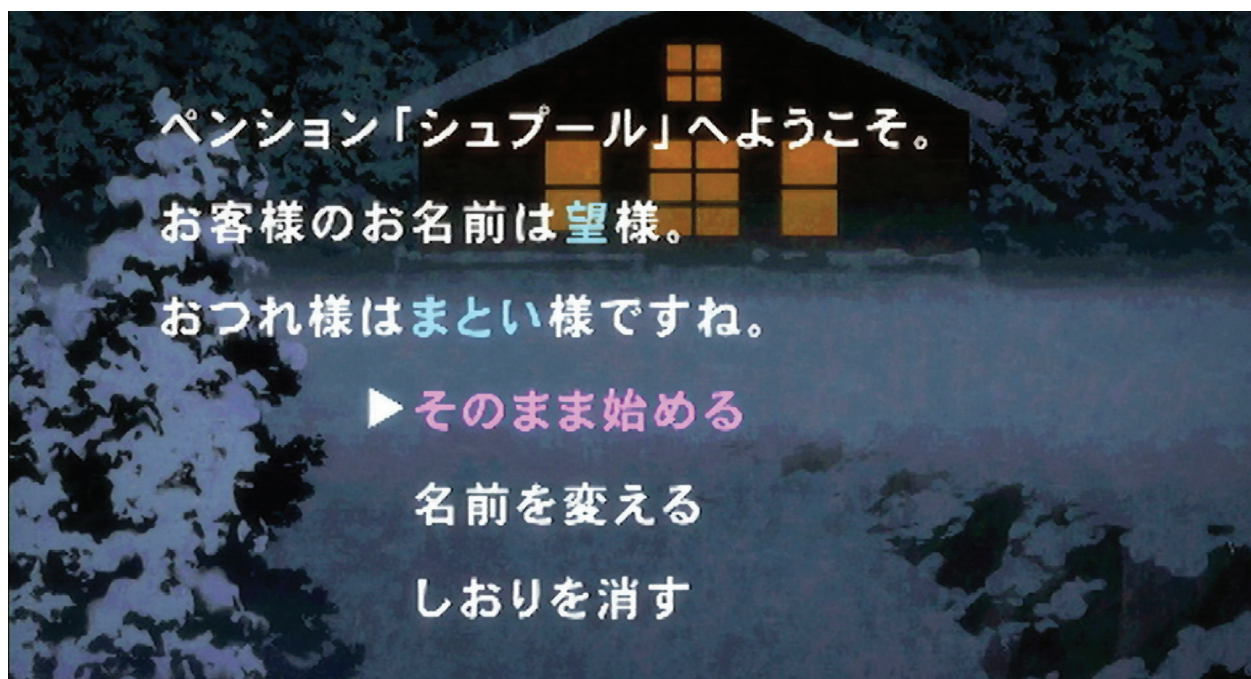
### "I PEEL OUT ON A STOLEN..."

Kaere is about to sing another Ozaki song before she is (thankfully) stopped. It’s Ozaki’s first single, “Juugo no Yoru” (“The Night of the 15th”), and the full line is: “I peel out on a stolen bike, with no destination in mind.”

### I KNOW, LET'S GO TO KYOTO.

This is the slogan used in a famous 1993 PR campaign from the Central Japan Railway Company (known as JR Central for short). It was meant to entice tourists who live in Tokyo to travel west and visit the old capital, Kyoto.

### WELCOME TO THE SPUR LODGE.



The screen here is an almost exact replica of the start screen from *Kamaitachi no Yoru*, the Super Famicom visual novel game mentioned in previous liner notes. “Spur Lodge” is where the game takes place, and the option to “Delete Bookmark” refers to bookmarks that players receive in the game after completing various endings.

## PROTECT CONSTITUTION ARTICLE 9!

As mentioned in previous liner notes, Article 9 of the Japanese constitution outlaws war as a means to settle international disputes. And this poster on the wall is very close to an actual campaign poster from the Japanese Communist Party. However, the name of the party (“Kyou-san-to”, written 共産党) has been disguised by using different kanji: 今日三等. These kanji can also be pronounced “kyousanto”, but they mean “today’s third class”.

## AT YOUR SERVICE

The Japanese text here is “kongotomo yoroshiku”. This is a formal-sounding phrase that demons use when you summon them in the Shin Megami Tensei series of games.

## THE LODGE: WINTER STORY

The name of this “movie” is a play on The Department Store: Summer Story, a 1991 live-action TV series about daily life and romance for the workers at a department store. It had a follow-up series in 1992 called The Department Store: Autumn Story.

## EXTRA-SPECIAL QUESTS



Keep a close eye on the guests at the Spur Lodge. As soon as Nozomu is listed as a murder suspect, more and more people start to appear. The first two additions are Tarou Asou, the politician who loves manga, and Burumata Chinshaburou, a man with perfectly-coiffed hair from Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club. Then, the next time we see the guests, four more have been added: the Emperor Penguin, and Kaizou Katsu, Umi Natori, and Chitan Tsubouchi from Katte ni Kaizou.

## "SENSEI, YOU'RE A LITTLE HIGHER UP IN THE CREDIT ROLL NOW!"

Right after Matoi says this, we're shown a black screen saying that Nozomu has leveled up to level 4. This is a reference to the Dragon Quest series of games - when a character levels up in those games, text like this appears to show the player their new stats and abilities. “Squelch”, by the way, is a spell that removes poison effects.

## THE TOJINBO SUICIDES

As mentioned in a previous liner note, Tojinbo is a notorious suicide spot.

## DEPRESSION-FUL COUNTRY

In 2006 Shinzo Abe wrote a book called Utsukushiiku Kuni e (美しい国へ, “Toward a Beautiful Country”). But the text on this logo has swapped out the first



kanji, which means “beautiful” (美, pronounced “utsu”), and replaced it with the kanji for “depression” (鬱, also pronounced “utsu”).

## NO LONGER ISHIKORO

This is a mashup of Osamu Dazai’s novel No Longer Human, and Ishikoro (“Stone”), which is the name of Nozomu’s doujinshi that he wrote in episode 7 of season 1.

## (T)HIS WEAKNESS IS UNLIKE YOU, BROTHER..

This batch of Lupin-style text all has to do with pachislot machines:

- **(T)his weakness is unlike you, Brother:** Refers to a machine called Fist of the North Star 2: Legend of the One Who Rules Troubled Times - Tenha Chapter. The main character in the game is Raoh, the oldest of the Hokuto brothers.

- **(T)he White Devil really is a devil:** In 2007, a pachislot machine was released based on the 1981 movie Mobile Suit Gundam II: Soldiers of Sorrow. “The White Devil” is the Zeon forces’ derogatory nickname for the Gundam.

- **(O)028:** In the same way that pachinko machines use balls as a payout to avoid Japanese gambling laws, pachislot machines use tokens. The bigger you win at pachislot, the more coins you get. However, a pachislot machine called 2027 was infamous for having a tiny bonus payout - only 28 tokens. (For comparison, other games can pay out hundreds.) Because of this, 2channel’s Pachislot Board called the game “0028”, and the nickname stuck.

- **(Y)ou’ve got mail! Your pounding heart is a great song:** “You’ve Got Mail” and “Your Pounding Heart” are both songs from the pachislot game Dorista: Mint’s Heroine Rescue Mission.

- **(I) wanna play Bancho!** This refers to a popular series of pachislot games called Osu! Bancho. “Bancho” is an old term for a juvenile delinquent.

- **(D)-Disqualified:** This one actually isn’t a pachislot machine - it’s from an upcoming scene involving Maeda-kun. He wants to combine (à la Genesis of Aquarion), but he doesn’t have what it takes.

## POROKOCA RIDING THE WAVES

This episode title is a play on a short story written by Yuriko Miyamoto called Koropokkuru Riding the Wind.

## JINROKU’S HERO

When Harumi discovers Jinroku-sensei reading manga, a quick silhouette appears. It’s Kenshiro, the quick-punching protagonist of Fist of the North Star.

## THE COMPANY YOU KEEP, PART 1

We see Jinroku-sensei at the pachinko parlor, but he’s not alone. Sitting to his left is the gambling addict Kaiji from the famous 1996 manga Kaiji. And to his right, it’s Milfeulle Sakuraba, the unnaturally lucky pink-haired girl from Galaxy Angel (though her hair has been changed to blonde here).

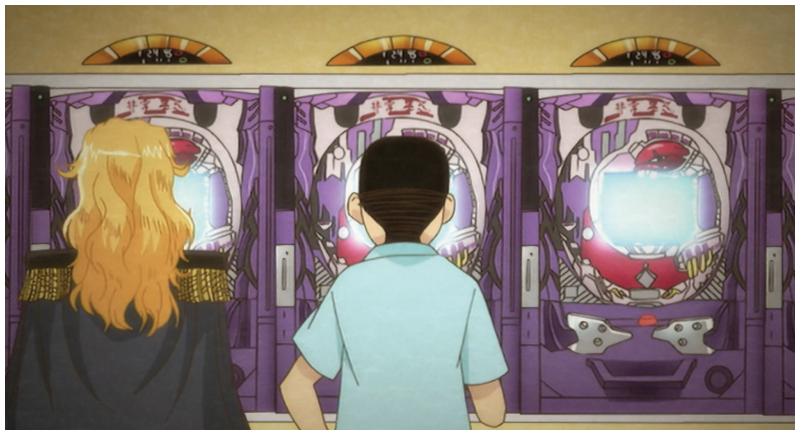


## EXCHANGE STUDENT

After Harumi mis-generes *Fist of the North Star*, the camera moves back to the teacher's office, but there's an unexpected guest sitting behind a row of books. The boy with the spiky black hair is Getto Rando, the main character of Kouji Kumeta's *Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club*.

## SENSEI → KAIZOU → SOUTHERN

Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei has been Kouji Kumeta's most popular manga thus far. And so, this is the path that many new fans take: first they find out about Zetsubou-sensei, then they check out *Katte ni Kaizou* (Kumeta's second-biggest work), and then they move on to *Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club*.



## THE COMPANY YOU KEEP, PART 2

As Nozomu is describing the “counter-current phenomenon”, the man sitting on the left is Reinhard von Lohengramm from the long-running series *Legend of the Galactic Heroes*.

## "THEN THEY GET INTERESTED AND START READING THE SOURCE MANGA!"

There are a few noteworthy things in this middle-aged bachelor pad.

The first is the cardboard box in the upper-right hand corner, which says “Konozama”. This is a term that's used to ridicule the online retail giant Amazon.com whenever shipments are messed up, and especially if pre-ordered items don't arrive on time. “Konozama” is “Amazon OK” backwards, but in Japanese, it also means “this (is a) mess”.

Next is the little pink blob next to the TV. It's Shichimi, the little white puffball mascot from *Negima!*

And finally, the bookshelves are full of manga that are all slightly misspelled. *Negima!*, which is usually written in a combination of katakana and hiragana (ネギま), has been spelled here with the kanji for “onion” and “demon”: (葱魔). Haruhi is on the shelf here as “Hahiru”. *Popotan* is usually written in hiragana (ぽぽたん), but here it's in katakana: (ポポタン).

There's even a copy of “Zetsubou-senkou” on the shelf. If you recall from season 1, “Zetsubou-senkou” is the title of a doujinshi that Ken Akamatsu put in *Negima!* as a way to poke fun at Zetsubou-sensei (“senkou” is a derogatory term for a teacher), and then Kouji Kumeta drew it into Zetsubou-sensei just because he could.

## THE COMPANY YOU KEEP, PART 3

When poor Maeda-kun is in the pachinko parlor, there are two rows of patrons. In the back row, facing away, it's Rei Ayanami on the left and Asuka Langley Soryu on the right, two young Eva pilots from *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. And in the front row, facing the viewer, the man on the left is Sirius de Alisia, and the man on





the right is Apollo. They're both from Genesis of Aquarion. This also explains why they keep repeating "It feels good", which is something the show's pilots often say when their machines combine.

## **KOTOMI**

Maeda-kun's "strange clothing" is a T-shirt featuring Kotomi Ichinose from the visual novel Clannad. (Though her hair is supposed to be dark blue.)

## **YOU A SHOCK!**

This is a play on "You wa Shock!" It's the title of the first opening song for the 1984 Fist of the North Star anime.

## **EXAMPLE) KOMUGI-CHAN SP → THE SOULTAKE\***

The bunny girl on the older man's bag is Komugi Nakahara from the anime (and pachislot game) Nurse Witch Komugi. It's a harmless magical girl show... but it's also a spinoff series from The SoulTaker, a violent, bizarre show that starts off with the main character being murdered.

(By the way, "Komugi-chan SP" is the model designation used for the Nurse Witch Komugi pachislot machine.)

## **I WILL FREE YOU FROM YOUR REGRETS.**

This is a famous line from a 1979 period drama called Hissatsu Shigotonin ("Professional Assassins"). The show was so popular that it spawned several TV series and specials, eleven films, and of course, a long line of pachinko machines.

## **"THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT THAT BURCHE\* WAS A REAL PLAYER!"**

The censored name is "Burchet", a fictional Australian player in the Winning Eleven series of soccer games.

## **BEST PLAY PRO BASEBALL WAS MY THING...**

Best Play Pro Baseball is a Famicom game from 1988. It focused more on management than mechanics, so players would win games by swapping out pitchers and changing lineups rather than swinging a bat or pitching a ball.

The person writing this message apparently created his team by looking up Hanshin Tigers players ("Toragers" is a mashup of "tigers" and "tora", the Japanese word for "tiger"), and then entering in all their stats by hand.

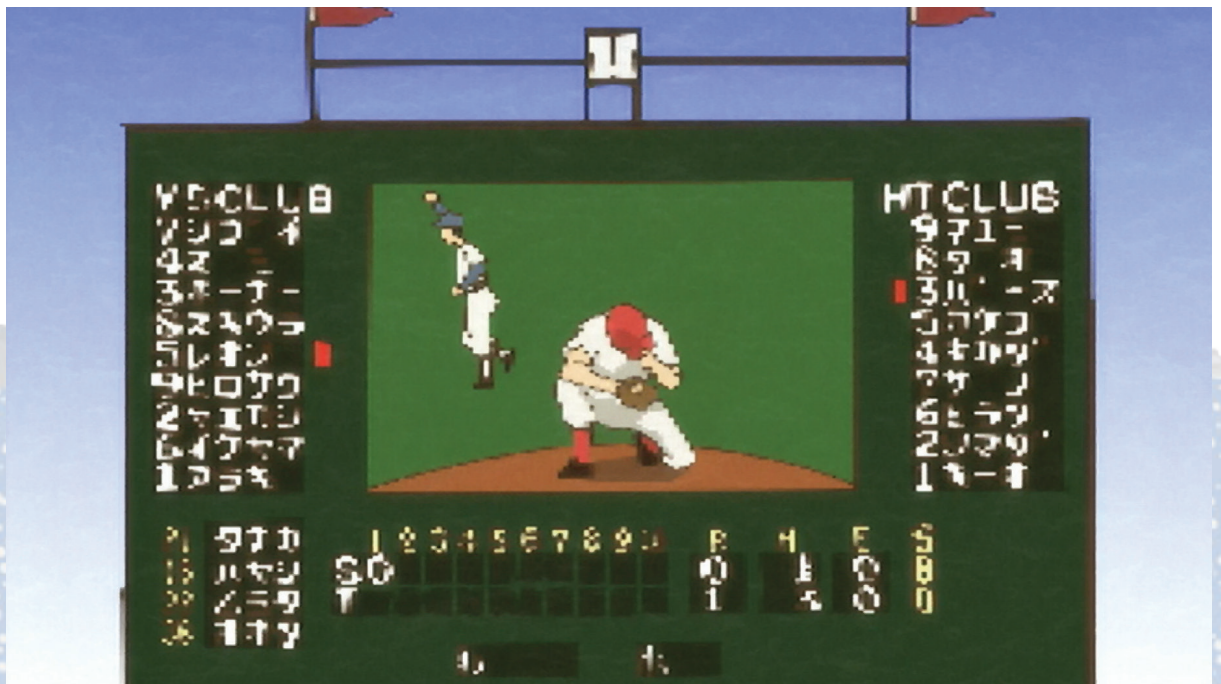
## **"BUT THEN I GOT INTO IT VIA FAMILY STADIUM, SO I ALWAYS GOT ACTUAL PLAYERS' NAMES SLIGHTLY WRONG."**

Pro Baseball: Family Stadium is another Famicom baseball game, though it released a bit earlier, in 1986. (It was brought over to the US in 1988 as R.B.I. Baseball.) For copyright reasons, the names of all the baseball players were slightly altered. Nozomu's friend mentions a few:

- "Mizumo" is Katsuhito Mizuno, a former pitcher with the Yomiuri Giants.
- "Omiai" is Hiromitsu Ochiai, one of Japan's biggest baseball stars who played for several different teams. He's near the top of Nippon Professional Baseball's All-Time Home Run Hitters list.
- "Kurumate" is Warren Cromartie, an American player who signed on with the Yomiuri Giants in 1983.

Pro Baseball: Family Stadium was created by Namco, a video game company with several other hits under its belt. As a result, Family Stadium included a “Namco Stars” team, made up entirely of fictional characters with names based on other Namco games. The player “P.P.” is meant to stand for Pole Position, Namco’s hit racing arcade game from 1982.

After this baseball conversation, we're shown a quick shot of a pixelated scoreboard. This is a near-exact recreation of the scoreboard from Moerou!! Pro Yakyuu, a 1987 Famicom game that was released in the US under the name Bases Loaded.



"THAT'S TRUE, THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS THAT PEOPLE GET INTO BY WAY OF VIDEO GAMES."

- **Chinese history** ← **Dynasty \*\*\*riors**: The censored name is Dynasty Warriors. It's a long-running series of action games set in a fictionalized version of China's "Three Kingdoms" period (from 220 to 280 AD).

- ## EPISODE 12



They're board game-esque titles where the player has to travel all around Japan and buy property, similar to Monopoly.

- **Starting a band** ← **Guitar Fr\*\*ks**: Guitar Freaks is a rhythm game where the player is a guitarist in a rock band. Though none of the Guitar Freaks games made it to America, they paved the way for later game series like Guitar Hero and Rock Band.

- **Watching every anime** ← **Super \*\*bot Wars**: Super Robot Wars has been around since 1991, when it premiered on the original Game Boy. It's a strategy RPG series that takes dozens of popular mecha series and mashes them all together into giant crossover stories.

- **Part-time miko jobs** ← **Saku\*\* Wars**: Sakura Wars games are a blend of several genres, including strategy RPG, visual novel, and dating sim. The series is set in a fictional version of the Taisho era, so the main characters, most of whom are women, are all dressed in early 20th century Japanese attire.

- **Techno music** ← **Ridge \*\*cer**: Ridge Racer, a 1993 arcade title from Namco, featured high-energy techno music in its soundtrack. Though techno music had been around since the 1980s, it was only just starting to catch on worldwide in the early 1990s.

- **Being a rail buff** ← **Den\*\*\* de Go!**: Densha de Go! ("Go by Train!") is a series of train simulator games. The player is a conductor who has to balance all the intricacies of driving a train while keeping to a strict schedule.

- **Rock climbing** ← **Sha\*\*\* of the Colossus**: Shadow of the Colossus is a game from Japan Studio with a unique premise: the hero has to defeat sixteen gigantic monsters by literally climbing them as though they were moving mountains, and then striking their weak points with his sword.

- **Going to cabaret clubs** ← **Ya\*\*za**: The Yakuza series of games are set in a (relatively) normal version of modern-day Japan. Though the story mostly revolves around gangsters and fighting, players can also wander off to spend time in bowling alleys, video game arcades, and yes, cabaret clubs.

- **S&M clubs** ← **Castle\*\*nia**: To be clear, there are no S&M clubs in Konami's Castlevania series. They're action games where the goal is to wander through castles and kill Dracula (or other similar evil terrors). However, considering that the main characters are often burly men dressed in leather and brandishing whips, well... We can see where some might make the connection.

- **Heart underwear** ← **Ghos\*\* 'n Gobli\*\***: Ghosts 'n Goblins is a famously difficult action game from 1985. The hero, Arthur, is a knight who has to rescue a princess. He starts out in a suit of armor, but if he takes a hit, his armor disappears and he's left wearing nothing but his heart-patterned boxers.

- **Going to the gym** ← **S\*\*lunker**: Spelunker is another game that's famous for how tough it is. But unlike Ghosts 'n Goblins, where the hero could take a hit if he had armor, Spelunker's main character could be killed instantly by almost anything. Taking a tiny fall, getting hit by bat poop, it was all deadly. So the joke here is, if you don't want to be like Spelunker's wimp of a protagonist, you should probably hit the gym.

- **I am a Gu\*dam** ← **Bonds of the Battlefield**: Mobile Suit Gundam: Bonds of the Battlefield was an arcade game that released in 2006. It was an immersive experience where the player would sit in a P.O.D. (Panoramic Optical Display) which simulated the cockpit of a Gundam, and then



join up with other players for team battles. At the time, it was probably the closest anyone could come to piloting a real Gundam. (Though it would take an extremely dedicated fan to be able to declare, like Setsuna F. Seiei from Mobile Suit Gundam 00, that “I am a Gundam”.)

### ***"I MADE THE CALL ON MY OWN..."***

This is a line from chapter 57 of *Katte ni Kaizou*. Kaizou thinks the world is about to be destroyed, and he's choosing which people (and which parts of human culture) will get to survive. Others are bickering about which anime should be preserved, so Kaizou butts in and says, “I made the call on my own. It'll be the “Cucuruz Doan's Island” episode from *\*undam*.”

Cucuruz Doan's Island (which Nozomu's friend is also talking about) is an episode of the original Mobile Suit Gundam series from 1979. It's riddled with animation errors and strange dialogue, and the staff considered it such an embarrassment that the show's director requested that it never be released in North America. However, the episode's awkwardness has made it popular with hardcore Gundam fans.

### ***"I BOUGHT A \*AC!"***

The censored word is “Mac”, as in Macintosh, the line of personal computers created by Apple Inc. Nozomu accuses her of getting an iPod first, since Apple's portable mp3 player was at the height of its popularity in the mid/late 2000s.

### ***'KAN AND KODANSHA DREAM COLLABORATION***

“Kan and KoDanSha” refers to “Shogakukan” and “Kodansha”, the two companies which publish *Weekly Shounen Sunday* and *Weekly Shounen Magazine*, respectively. 2009 would be the 50th anniversary for both magazines - they both launched on March 17th, 1959. So in a very rare move, the two companies came together and celebrated with an enormous year-long joint PR campaign. At a press conference on March 19th, 2008, representatives from Shogakukan and Kodansha unveiled plans for the upcoming year, including a collaboration magazine, exclusive anniversary clothing, a video game release from Konami, and more.

Fans were excited to see if anything would happen with their favorite series. The SHAFT animators were no exception, it seems, since the other sign that appears in this scene - “Will Kumeta-sensei also bring back Kaizo power?!” - is referring to the fact that *Katte ni Kaizou* ran in *Weekly Shounen Sunday*, while *Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei* was running in *Weekly Shounen Magazine*. Kouji Kumeta was in a unique position to do some crossover shenanigans. In the end, there was no special Zetsubou-sensei manga, but there was some neat merch like figures and keychains, and Nozomu even made an appearance in the aforementioned Konami game as a support character.

### ***"YOU GOT INTO THOSE BECAUSE OF MUSHIKING, DIDN'T YOU?"***

Mushiking is an arcade card-battling game that Sega released in 2003. It's a rock-paper-scissors style game where players scan “Beetle Cards” to enlist the help of a realistically rendered beetle, and then use “Skill Cards” to help their digital beetle fight off a horde of invading insects.

### ***I FEEL SICK***

This is Asuka's final line in the 1997 movie *The End of Evangelion*.



**"HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?!"**



As all of Harumi's Neon Genesis Evangelion secrets are revealed, some characters from that series start to creep into the shot, as well. In the middle of the group, hiding near the back, we can see the Eva pilot Rei Ayanami (though her hair is black instead of white). And off to the right, near the bottom, there's the floating face of Sachiel, the enemy Angel that appears in the first episode of the Evangelion TV series.

### **21ST ANGEL: KIGAERU**

Kaere is being presented here like one of the monstrous Angels from Neon Genesis Evangelion.

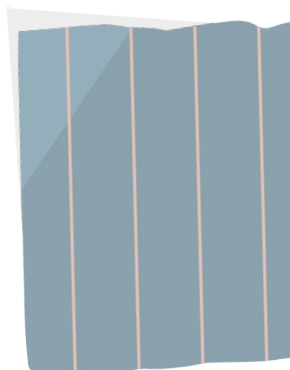
There are two men peeping at her - the one on the left is Maeda-kun, and the one on the right is a man named Masashi Tashiro. Masashi was once a Japanese TV celebrity and vocalist, but in 2000, he was caught filming up a woman's skirt and lied that he was doing it for a film called *Mini ni Tako ga Dekiru*. He was temporarily banned from the entertainment industry, but tried to make a comeback in June of 2001, saying, "Please give Masashi Tashiro one more chance." Less than six months later, he was arrested for peeping, then again days later for drug possession. From there, it was a downward spiral into cocaine use and more filming up women's skirts.

(By the way, Kaere is the 21st angel because "21" is her student number in Nozomu's roster.)

### **"SOON YOU'LL LEARN HOW TASTY CABBAGE IS FROM TRYING CABBAGE TARO!"**

Cabbage Taro is a snack made of puffed corn balls that have been dusted with aonori seaweed and flavored with a tangy sauce. Despite what Kafuka says, there isn't actually any cabbage in Cabbage Taro.

Also, Kafuka's image of future-Harumi is eating Cabbage Taro with chopsticks. This peculiar way of eating snacks is popularly considered to be an early warning sign of becoming a NEET.



## WHO WAS THAT MASKED COW



We're shown a quick cut of a little cartoon cow with its eyes covered to protect its identity. But there's no fooling us - that's Wassachi, the mascot for Wasabeef Potato Chips. ("Wasabeef" is a mashup of "wasabi" and "beef", the two flavors used to coat this particular brand of potato chip.)

## "DING, DING, DING, POP!"

If you remember, way back in episode 2 when Nozomu's friend was first introduced, he did this same motion with the same sound effect. Just as a refresher, this is a reference to the 1975 anime Ikkyu-san, and the way the main character in that series comes up with solutions.

The phrases he chants are also things that Ikkyu says... sort of. Ikkyu from the 1975 show says "I'm just resting my eyes", which is "hitoyasumi". But here in Zetsubou-sensei, this Ikkyu changes "hitoyasumi" to "hitomukashi", which means "long ago". Guess that makes sense for a guy who loves old things as much as he does.

## LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE

Again referencing the 1975 anime Ikkyu-san, that show's opening song starts with the lyrics, "Love, love, love, love, love, love, I love you!"

## THERE ARE SOME THINGS I JUST CAN'T STAND.

There's a type of "spot the difference" game in Japan where one video slowly timelapses into another, and the goal is to be the fastest at noticing what's changing. It's commonly called an "Aha Video". That's what's happening in this shot here in Zetsubou-sensei - the blackboard starts out empty, but this message slowly appears. How quickly did you notice?

The message itself, by the way, is from Kouji Kumeta. It was his Author Comment in the March 5th, 2008 issue of Weekly Shounen Magazine.

## "GO UPSTREAM AND WORK THINGS OUT FROM THERE! IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME!"

Here's Kafuka's list of things that are usually done backwards:

- Determine due date → Schedule wedding: "Due date" as in, "when the baby is due".
- Funds allocated → Decide what public works to build: Look at all this tax money! Wonder what we should do with it?
- Cast your star actor → Start writing the script



• **Get test results → Decide future dreams:** “Test results” as in, “How did you do on your final exams?”

• **Manga artist submits work → Decide how many pages to run:** Manga magazines have a fixed number of pages, which means each manga story can only have so many pages allotted to it. If the publisher always set that allotment ahead of time, it would make the artists’ lives easier. But alas...

• **Class has paired off → Decide who you like:** Couples form quickly whenever a new semester starts, so don’t wait too long to figure out who you want to take on a date.

• **Rival drawn too tall → Put him on a diet, brutal fight ensues:** The famous 1968 boxing manga *Ashita no Joe* (“Tomorrow’s Joe”) was a collaboration between writer Asao Takamori and illustrator Tetsuya Chiba. At one point, Takamori wrote a chapter where the hero, Joe, encounters a powerful boxer named Tooru Rikiishi. However, when Takamori saw the finished manga version of the chapter, there was a big problem... Chiba had drawn Rikiishi as a tall, muscular man. But Joe, the main character, was a small guy. Just comparing the two of them visually, there was no way they’d ever be in the same weight class, which meant they wouldn’t be able to box in the ring. So Takamori thought about how to continue the story, and came up with this: Rikiishi is so determined to fight Joe, that he undergoes a drastic weight loss routine in order to make it down to Joe’s Bantamweight class. In the end, Joe and Rikiishi’s fight is so brutal that it winds up costing Rikiishi his life.

• **Dream anime adaptation → Revised downward profits forecast:** Across all of anime history, there are plenty of highly anticipated shows that underperformed. But if we look at just the late 2007/ early 2008 timeframe around when this episode released, the most prominent example is *KimiKiss*, an anime that didn’t meet expectations. Bandai Visual, one of the show’s producers, took a big hit in profitability that year, but it was due to several reasons, not just *KimiKiss*.

• **\*\*-sensei → \*\*-sensei (read both!):** Zetsubou-sensei and Negima-sensei.

• **I was hoping for a third season! → We have to sell 30,000? I’ve lost hope!:** As mentioned before, “30,000 copies” is a running gag about SHAFT’s sales targets for Zetsubou-sensei.

## **WARRIORS OF LIGHT, ASSEMBLE!**

This was the tagline for 2006’s *Ultraman Festival*, a yearly celebration of all things *Ultraman*. However, the white text on a blue background is also a callback to the opening screen of *Final Fantasy* for the NES. The heroes in that game are four young Warriors of Light who have gathered together to save the world.

## **MYSELF**

Yumi Adachi is a popular actress and singer who’s been in several movies and TV shows. Her mother, meanwhile, is Yuri Adachi, an adult model. In 2006, Yuri released a nude photobook called “*Myself*”, and Nozomu seems to have bought a copy (which is why Matoi looks so distressed).

## **"BY THE WAY, PONYTAILS TURN ME ON. I GOT INTO THEM BY WAY OF HORSEBACK RIDING."**

“Ponytails turn me on” is a line that Kyon says in episode 14 of *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* (and the picture of a girl in a ponytail is Haruhi herself). Nozomu’s friend and Kyon are both voiced by the same actor, Tomokazu Sugita.

## **"I'M A MAN'S MAN, SO I'LL GET INTO MIYAZAKI ANIME BY WAY OF HIS SON, GORO!"**

Hayao Miyazaki is a legendary animator, and co-founder of the famous animation studio, Studio Ghibli. But he also has a second studio called Nibariki, which he founded in 1998. It's a small, personal studio, which he runs out of a large family house that he nicknamed "Butaya", which means "the pig house".

Hayao's son, Goro Miyazaki, is also an animation director with Studio Ghibli; but back when this episode aired in 2008, the only movie credit he had to his name was the ill-received *Tales from Earthsea*. Aside from his anime endeavors, Goro also managed the Mitaka Forest Art Museum, a museum entirely dedicated to works by Studio Ghibli.

## **"I'M A MAN'S MAN, SO I'LL GET INTO AYAYA BY WAY OF MAYAYA!"**

The legendary boy band SMAP also hosted a variety show called SMA-PxSMAP. In one particular skit, SMAP's leader Masahiro Nakai played a parody version of the real-life pop singer Aya Matsuura, whose nickname is "Ayaya". But Masahiro's version of her was called "Mayaya".

## **"I'M A MAN'S MAN, SO I'LL BECOME A FAN OF GAMON BY WAY OF RAMEN!"**

Gamon Kaai is a Japanese actor who appeared on several variety shows. He was known as a food lover, and in 2005, he actually opened his own chain of ramen shops called "Ramen Gamon". The stores were very successful and earned a lot of money... but in 2007, he had to shut them down. It turns out that his talent agency held exclusive rights to the use of his name and likeness, and they sued him over it.

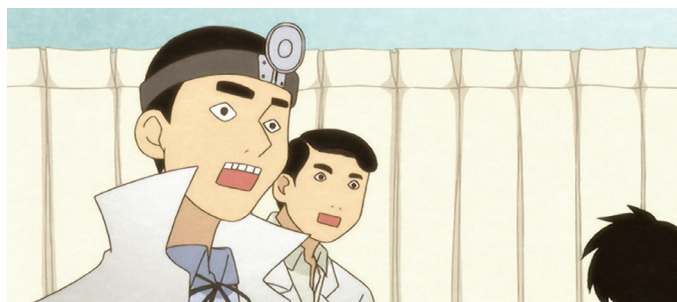
## **TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM**

The Transportation Museum was a small museum in Akihabara that featured simulators, model trains, and old train station signs. However, the exhibit was closed in 2006 and moved to a much bigger Railway Museum located in Saitama.

## **"WE GOT INTO JAZZERCISE BY WAY OF CAT'S EYE."**

As mentioned in a previous liner note, *Cat's Eye* is a manga and anime series from the early 1980s about three sisters who are also art thieves. Jazzercise, meanwhile, is a form of exercise that combines aerobics with dancing and popular music for a full-body workout. The connection here is that the *Cat's Eye* girls wear brightly colored unitards, similar to what women often wore in Jazzercise workout videos. What's more, the ending credits for each episode of *Cat's Eye* featured the girls doing several Jazzercise-esque exercises.

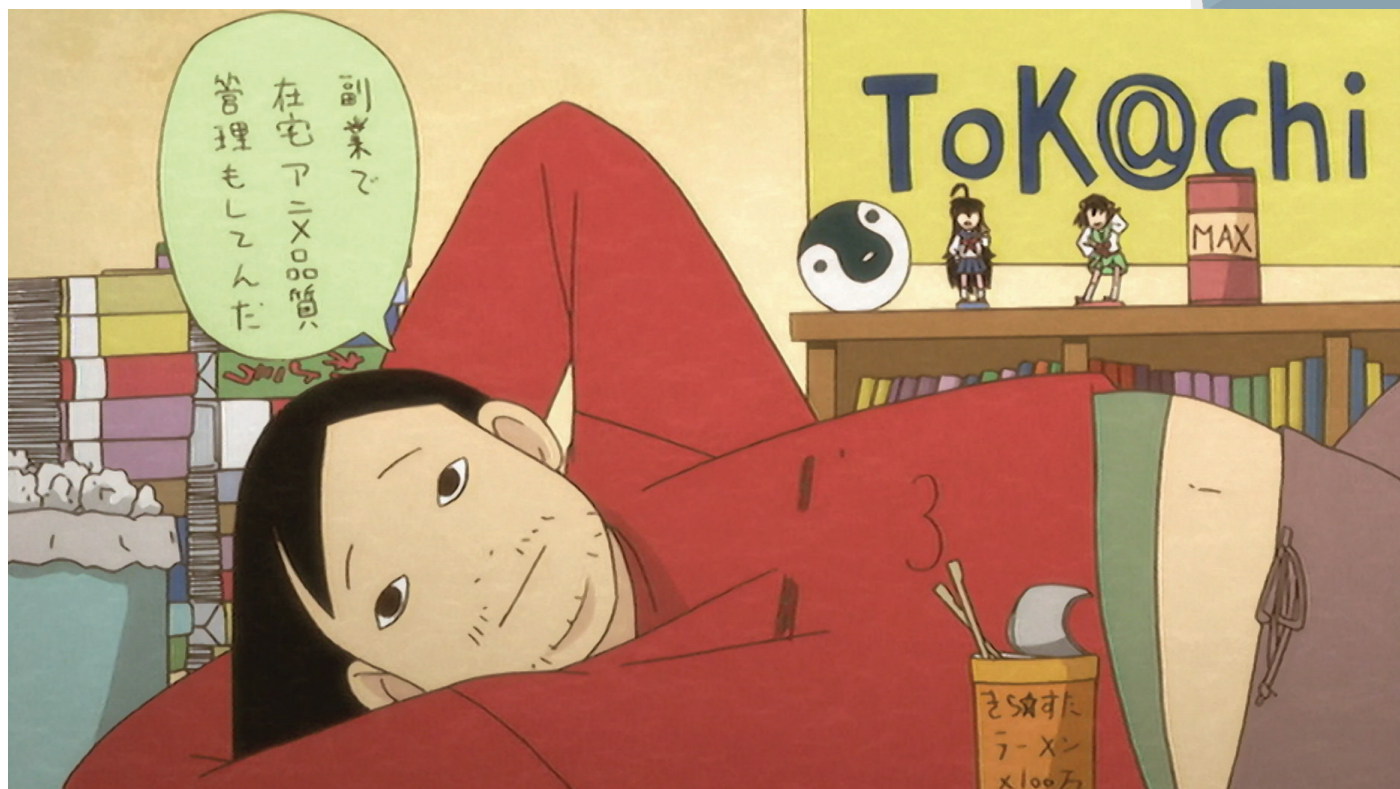
## **"I CHOSE A MEDICAL CAREER BY WAY OF NURSE ROLEPLAYING."**



There's a shadowy figure in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen as he says this... It's a silhouette of Kurou Hazama, the main character of Osamu Tezuka's famous medical manga, *Black Jack*.



**"I GOT INTO A FIRST-RATE UNIVERSITY, BUT NOW I'M AN AT-HOME SECURITY PROFESSIONAL."**



“At-Home Security Professional” is a euphemism for NEETs who stay at home all day “guarding” the house. And the other job he claims to have, “At-Home Anime QC Checker”, is a euphemism for NEETs who watch a lot of anime.

Even though he’s not actually in the anime industry, he certainly has the “office” for it! There are anime trinkets all over his room. The poster on the wall, which says TOK@CHI, is a reference to the “tokachi tsukuchite” meme from IDOLM@STER (mentioned in previous liner notes). One of the books behind him says “Hatsu ♪ Miku”, referring to Hatsune Miku, the digital mascot for Vocaloid software. The figures on his shelf are parodies of Konata and Haruhi from Lucky Star and The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya, respectively. His cup ramen is labelled “Kira Suta” (a play on “Lucky Star”), and the image on his shirt is the famous closed-eyed, cat-mouthed face that Konata makes in Lucky Star.

**"I USED TO PRODUCE IDOL SINGERS, BUT NOW I PRODUCE GAME IDOLS."**

The “game idol” currently on screen is Yayoi Takatsuki, one of the many girls from the IDOLM@STER series of games.

**"OH, THESE NOBLE COUNTERCURRENT PHENOMENA!"**

This is Ikkyu’s list of ways that people tend to go backwards:

- **Naga\*\*\*\* Masami → Touc\***: Masami Nagasawa is a popular actress who’s been in dozens of films and won several awards. In 2005, she played Minami Asakura in the live-action movie version of Touch, which led some people to discover Mitsuru Adachi’s famous 1981 baseball manga for the very first time.
- **\*\*mura Ryoko → YA\*ARA**: Similarly, Ryoko Tamura was a female judoka who played the sport incredibly well. When she went to represent Japan in the 1992

Barcelona Olympics, people began to call her Yawara-chan, after the heroine in Naoki Urasawa's 1986 manga Yawara!

- **Bae-sama's my bae! → Fluent in Korean:** Bae Yong-joon is the star of the Korean drama Winter Sonata. That show was so popular that it single-handedly launched a Korean pop-culture boom in Japan. It even led some people to learn a whole new language.

- **Baseball dog → Carp fan:** Nowadays in Japan, many teams have a "baseball dog" - a dog that carries a basket of baseballs to the pitcher or an umpire at the beginning of the game. But the very first baseball dog was Mickey, a golden retriever who performed this duty for the Hiroshima Carp starting in 2005. Mickey was a huge hit, even with people who didn't otherwise follow baseball.

- **\*\*\*\*ing Musume → Sharam \*:** As mentioned in previous liner notes, Morning Musume's lead producer is a man named Tsunku♂. But Tsunku♂ is no stranger to music - back in 1988, he was the lead singer for a band called Sharam Q.

- **Butsu Zone → Buddhism:** Shortly before he created Shaman King, Hiroyuki Takei wrote a manga called Butsu Zone. Butsu Zone was about a young orphan girl who was the reincarnation of the Buddha Miroku, and her protector named Senju who was actually the Thousand-Hand Kannon. The story was steeped in Buddhism, and although it was cancelled after only 19 chapters, it had a rather large fan following.

- **Figures → Tim \*\*rton:** The 1993 film The Nightmare Before Christmas wasn't just popular in the US. It was a big hit in Japan, too, but in a way you might not expect: through figures. The Nightmare Before Christmas merchandise was plentiful and popular in Japan. Thus, people who might have had never heard of Tim Burton before suddenly found themselves acquainted with his work.

- **Buying a plasma TV → Paranormal research:** This is a roundabout reference to Yoshihiko Ootsuki, a Japanese scientist who specializes in plasma physics. He was famous for theorizing that all sorts of "paranormal activity" - from crop circles to flying saucers to human combustion - were caused by plasma.

- **Norika fan → Going to the K-1 grand prix:** Japanese beauty queen Norika Fujiwara was also surprisingly involved in the world of K-1 professional kickboxing. She was a guest announcer on their major shows, and was even friends with Swiss K-1 fighter Andy Hug.

- **Flowers \*\* the Shadows → Gekidan Hitori live shows:** Flowers in the Shadows is a 2006 novel about six people living on the fringes of society. Although there's humor in it, overall it's a serious story with a thought-provoking message. One would never guess that it's written by Gekidan Hitori, a stand-up comedian who does prop jokes and improv.

- **Ku\*\*moto Mai → Ku\*\*ki Mai :** The pop singer Mai Kuraki was incredibly popular in the early 2000s. (Anime fans might know her best from the many, many songs she has recorded for the Detective Conan series.) But her fame had a downside - her estranged father started trying to piggyback off her success. First, he tried to sell childhood videos of Mai to gossip magazines, but Mai contacted the authorities and stopped the sale. So instead, he wrote a book detailing all the "juicy secrets" from her younger years. He even went so far as to make a pornographic movie, starring an adult actress who called herself "Mai Kumamoto" (倉本麻衣), which is just one kanji stroke away from "Mai Kuraki" (倉木麻衣). Thus, the joke here in Zetsubou-sensei is that





someone watched this illicit Mai Kumamoto video, and then became a fan of the real Mai Kuraki as a result.

• **Choshu \*\*riki → Pro wrestling fan:** Koriki Choshu is a comedian whose most famous act involves imitating the real pro-wrestler Riki Choshu. (“Koriki” means “Little Riki”).

• **Train Man → Akihabara:** Train Man is the love story that started out as posts on 2-channel, and eventually became so popular that it spawned novel, manga, TV, and movie versions. Since the main character is an otaku, Akihabara is an important place in the story. Perhaps that encouraged some fans to give it a visit!

• **Protruding Nipples → Tennis fan:** Tennis star Maria Sharapova was famous in the 2000s for her world-class skill. However, she was also famous for wearing tops while she played that clearly showed off her nipples.

• **Ebisu (the beer) → Ebisu (the place):** “Ebisu”, the beer brand name, is written in this list as エビス (e-bi-su). However, in real life, the beer’s name is actually spelled エビス (ye-bi-su), using the archaic kana コ. This means that every beer can you see from this brand will have “Yebisu” written on it in English letters. However, the “y” is silent, so it’s still just pronounced “ebisu”. Yebisu Beer has been around since 1890, and the Tokyo neighborhood of Ebisu really was named after the beer, since it used to be produced there.

• **Anime → Temple pilgrimage:** Washinomiya Shrine is a real-life shrine in Saitama Prefecture. When it appeared in the opening for the anime Lucky Star, otaku came out in droves to visit the shrine, to the point that it started to bother the locals.

• **Hilarious stories set in schools → Reality:** The world would be a much different place if high schools in real life were anything like high schools in manga.

• **“I want to be appreciated!” → Arrested:** From the fall of 2003 all the way through January of 2008, Shouji Sakai and Katsuhisa Ikema uploaded approximately 9,200 anime episodes to a file-sharing service called Winny. Winny was supposed to be completely anonymous, but the police found them anyway, and arrested them both in February 2008. According to the affidavit, the two men did what they did because they “wanted to be appreciated.”

• **Dragon Quest Casino → Yoshimune S:** Starting with Dragon Quest IV in 1990, almost every Dragon Quest game has included a casino. They’re a place where the player can play slot machines, poker, roulette, even bingo. However, those who want to stop betting fake video game gold and start betting real money instead might just end up playing Yoshimune. It’s a pachislot game from 2003 that features a cartoon version of Tokugawa Yoshimune. It was the second most popular pachislot game at the time, behind only Fist of the North Star.

• **Thanks for your help back then → Sentai Series 2008:** Nao Oikawa started out as an adult video actress in 2000. Within a few years, she was one of the most well-known adult idols in Japan. However, she eventually swapped over into mainstream video work, and in 2008, she played a villainess on the kids’ show Engine Sentai Go-onger, part of Toei’s Super Sentai series.

• **For that live set → Suzuka 8 hours:** In 2007, a group of over 900 Japanese musicians set the record for the world’s longest concert, playing for 184 hours non-stop. Even when a magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck during the performance, the woman who was playing piano at the

time just kept on going. “Suzuka 8 hours”, meanwhile, refers to the Coca-Cola Suzuka 8-Hour Road Race, a motorcycle endurance race held every year in Suzuka City. Both of these activities take a massive amount of stamina, so in a sense, doing one would be good practice for the other.

- **DVD sales → x365:** As mentioned in previous liner notes, Hidamari Sketch x 365 is the sequel to the original Hidamari Sketch. Apparently season 1 sold well on DVD, which allowed SHAFT to green-light season 2.

- **Second season → Seppou shita (I have high hopes)!** This is most likely referring to Pani Poni Dash! In previous episodes, the SHAFT animators have alluded to how they’d like to make a second season. Unfortunately, as of this writing, those hopes have not yet been fulfilled.

- **Kaizou? → Stand by for details:** Even though Kouji Kumeta wrote Katte ni Kaizou before Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei, Zetsubou-sensei was the first to be animated. Katte ni Kaizou would eventually get a six-episode OVA, but not until May of 2011. (This episode of Zetsubou-sensei aired in March 2008, to give you an idea of how long the Kaizou anime was in the works!)

- **MAD → The original:** In Japanese slang, a “MAD movie” is any fan-edited video that uses existing works as its source. For example, a music video made with anime clips, or a compilation video of someone’s favorite fight scenes. Thus “MAD → The original” refers to someone watching a MAD movie, and then getting interested in the original show because of it.

- **See Maru-channel → DVD corrections:** “Maru” is being used as a censor marker here; the actual word should be “2-channel”. In other words, people complain on 2-channel about mistakes they saw while watching a show, the animation staff reads those complaints, and then the mistakes get corrected for the show’s DVD release.

## ***“O LEGENDARY KINGS OF COUNTERCURRENT!”***

Nozomu follows up with his own list of countercurrent examples, which are meant to be read right-to-left:

- **Real \*\*pin ← Impersonator:** Kanichi Kurita is a voice actor who could do a fantastic impression of Yasuo Yamada’s Lupin the 3rd voice. In fact, he once left Yamada a voicemail entirely in Lupin’s voice. Yamada called him back and left the exact same message in the exact same Lupin voice, but jokingly added at the end: “You idiot! I’m Lupin!” Sadly, Yasuo Yamada passed away in 1995, at the age of 62. So from Farewell to Nostradamus onward, Kanichi Kurita officially played the voice of Lupin the 3rd.

- **Star in actual sequel ← Parody movie:** In 1990, Hong Kong actor Stephen Chow starred in a movie called All for the Winner (the Chinese title was “The Saint of Gamblers”). It was a parody of a 1989 action movie called God of Gamblers, which starred Chow Yun-fat. All for the Winner turned out to be so popular that, when it came time for a sequel, that sequel movie was simply called God of Gamblers II, and it starred both Stephen Chow and Chow Yun-fat together. By the time God of Gamblers III came around, Stephen Chow had the singular starring role.

- **Build the road ← Build the house:** This is referring to the Akira Toriyama urban legend mentioned in a previous liner note. Basically, the story is that he was going to move closer to the Shonen Jump offices in Tokyo, but the local government in Aichi Prefecture didn’t want to lose his tax money, so they built a road to Tokyo just for him. (This rumor is, of course, false.) Incidentally, the line “I wanna fight somebody even tougher!” is being spoken in an informal, slangy accent like the character Goku uses in Dragon Ball.





## THE "DAM" PART



In the Gundam parody manga Tony Takezaki Presents Gundam Manga, there's a scene where Kycilia asks Char: "If the Guntank got its name because it has tank parts, and the Guncannon got its name because it has cannon parts, then what about the Gundam? What's the 'dam' part?" Char struggles for an answer, and finally tells her: "It's, uh... The bulgy part of the calf, on its leg."

## SINCE IT'S RIGHT HERE, I'LL PICK THIS RED DOOR!

This is from the 1996 Sega Saturn game Death Crimson. It's widely considered to be one of the worst games for the console, but its low-budget visuals and campy presentation also gained it a cult following.

During the game's opening movie, three friends are exploring some old ruins. One of them says this line about choosing the red door in front of him. Except it's not red, it's green. There is no red door.

## "LIKE I'M GONNA DIE!"

This is a parody of a scene in the 1982 film Space Runaway Ideon: Be Invoked. Cosmo, the pilot of the Ideon, is struck by a giant blast from a superweapon called the Gando Rowa. As he's being engulfed in light, he shouts out this line.

## HIGH FASHION

Nami is admiring a Che Guevara shirt, but there are other shirts for sale, as well. The t-shirt on the left is one of Asuna's Chupacabra t-shirts from Negima?!: Magister Negi Magi, and the t-shirt on the right features a picture of Ken from the famously bizarre 1974 anime Chargin' Man Ken!



## **PLEASURE...!**

This is a reference to a movie called *Sailor Suit and Machine Gun*. The main character, Izumi, says this iconic line after firing a machine gun.

## **CLOTHING STORE MARUKUSU**

“Marukusu” is how you would pronounce “Marx” in Japanese. Given the shirts Chiri is selling, it’s an obvious reference to Karl Marx, the author of *The Communist Manifesto*.

## **NEXT TIME I AM ZETSUBOU!**

This is yet another reference to Setsuna F. Seiei’s iconic “I am a Gundam” line from *Mobile Suit Gundam 00*.

## **DADDY-BARE-LEGS**

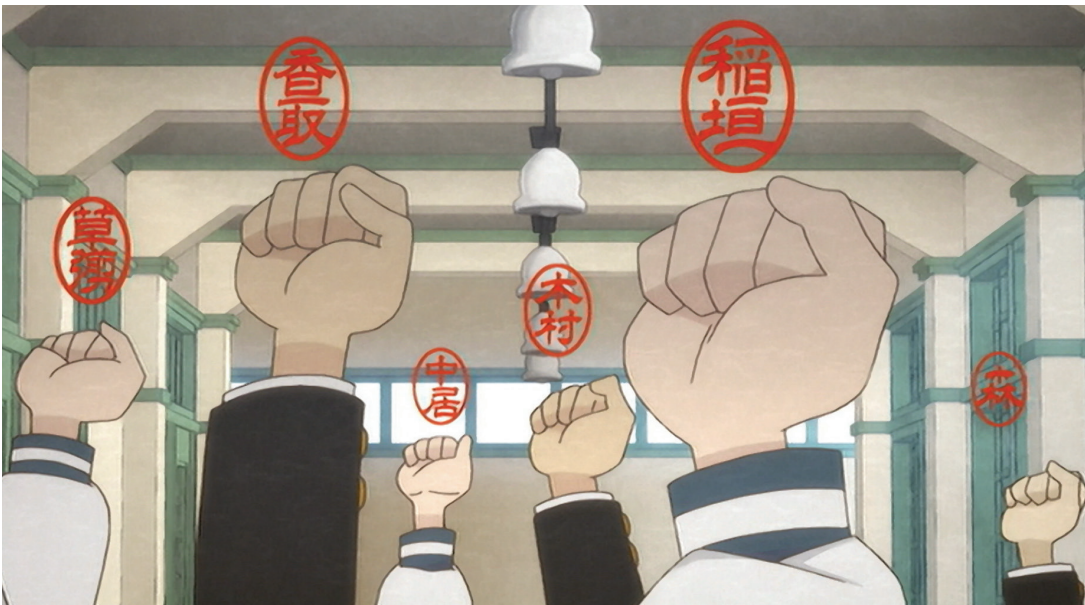
This next episode preview is a play on the novel *Daddy-Long-Legs* by Jean Webster. In the original story, an orphan named Judy is presented with an offer: an anonymous benefactor will pay her way through college, as long as she writes him a letter every month. She does so, and includes rudimentary drawings on the letters as well.

In this Zetsubou-sensei version, it sounds like the anonymous benefactor wants something much more specific.

# **EPISODE 13**

## **CASTING THE FIRST BEAN**

As the students prepare to attack Nozomu, there are several names above their bean-clenching fists: Katori, Inagaki, Kusanagi, Kimura, Nakai, and Mori. These are all members of SMAP, one of Japan’s most iconic boy bands.





## ST. HERMELIN HIGH SCHOOL

Today's school name comes from the 1996 PlayStation game Revelations: Persona.

## SMILE WITH NOTHING WASTED

This is a slogan used by Orix Life Insurance, one of the divisions of the Orix Corporation. Which leads us into the next liner note...

## "LIKE DRIVING OUT PRO ATHLETES WHOSE ANNUAL SALARIES ARE TOO HIGH!"

The baseball player being driven out is Norihiro Nakamura, who used to play for the Orix Buffaloes. (We'll learn more about him very soon.) And the one doing the bean throwing is Yoshihiko Miyauchi, former CEO of the Orix Corporation and owner of the Orix Buffaloes.

## "OR DRIVING PEOPLE OUT OF THE ARTS ASSOCIATION!"

When Motoya Izumi was only 21, he formally succeeded his terminally ill father as the head of the Izumi school of Kyogen. (Kyogen is a type of traditional Japanese theater similar to Noh, but its stories are more comedic than dramatic.) Motoya had plenty of experience, since he had been acting on stage since he was three years old. However, the Noh Association had not officially sanctioned Motoya's succession. What's more, they disapproved of his semi-scandalous marriage to a movie actress, along with his penchant for cancelled performances and double-bookings. Thus, even though Motoya Izumi was the most popular kyogen actor in years, in 2003, they booted him from the guild.

## DISMISSALS OF MYOHONJI TEMPLE IN KAMAKURA

This title is a spoof on a poem by the Meiji Era author Doppo Kunikida, called "Recollections of Myohonji Temple in Kamakura". The twist is that the word "recollection" (懷古) is pronounced "kaiko", but for this episode title, it's been swapped out with "dismissal" (解雇), which is also pronounced "kaiko".

## ULTIMA RATIO



When Chiri encounters oni in an alleyway, there's a yellow blimp looming in the skies overhead, with the words "Ultima Ratio" written on its side. It's exactly like the blimps that appear in Mamoru Oshii's 1993 film *Patlabor 2: The Movie*. Let's just hope no one tries to shoot it down... If you're curious, "Ultima Ratio" is Latin for "the last argument". King Louis XIV engraved a similar statement - *Ultima Ratio Regum*, "the last argument of kings" - on his cannons. It signified that if all other arguments failed, the final argument would be war.

## **KAMIGATA BOOKS NISHIKAWA DRUGS**

These two stores are paying homage to Norio Nishikawa and Yoshio Kamigata, a famous comedy duo from 1975. They disbanded in 1990, but made a comeback in 1994, and as of this writing, are still performing today.

## **PICTURE PERFECT**



The pictures hanging on the wall in the night duty room are almost all shots of Maeda-kun. There's a flower portrait, a funeral portrait, a portrait where he has Kenshiro's body from *Fist of the North Star*, and then on the far left, it swaps to a portrait of journalist Yoshiko Sakurai.

## **"A STRAY PRO BASEBALL PLAYER?!"**

This shaggy-looking fellow is Norihiro Nakamura. He was a power hitter and an eight-time All-Star, but at the time this *Zetsubou-sensei* story was published (January 2007), he was without a team.

Nakamura had been playing for the Los Angeles Dodgers, but in 2005, he returned to Japan and began playing for the Orix Blue Wave. Early in the year, a wild pitch hit him in the wrist, and the injury was bad enough that it required surgery. It threw him off for the rest of the season. The Orix management used this as an excuse to cut Nakamura's salary by 60 percent, but obviously Nakamura objected. After six rounds of negotiations with no agreement, Nakamura resigned from Orix.

Eventually, in February 2007, Nakamura signed a one-year deal with the Chunichi Dragons. The Dragons ended up winning the Japan Series that year, with Nakamura being crowned MVP.



## **"A STRAY HEAD OF STATE WHO WAS DRIVEN OUT OF HIS COUNTRY BY A COUP!"**

On September 19th, 2006, while Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinwatra was in New York City for a UN meeting, the Thai military overthrew the government. In a statement, the military accused the government of corruption, malfeasance, treason, conflicts of interest, and more.

After this event, the Prime Minister did not return to Thailand, but left New York for Great Britain instead. As of this writing, he still hasn't returned to his home country, though his daughter is currently running for Prime Minister there.

## **"A STRAY DIET MEMBER WHO WAS CAST OUT BY HER PARTY!"**

In 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi cabinet proposed splitting Japan's postal company, Japan Post, into four different companies and privatizing them all. Japan Post was the nation's largest employer, so reactions to this proposal ran hot. Proponents said that privatization would make Japan Post more efficient and less prone to corruption. Opponents said it would result in office closures and job losses.

One big opponent to the bill was Seiko Noda. She was a member of the LDP, the party that was making the proposal - but still, she opposed it, and that opposition cost her. When the September 2005 elections came around, Noda and the rest of the LDP members who voted against the postal privatization bill were not given party endorsement. Noda ended up running as an independent, and still managed to win her seat.

## **"A STRAY CEO WHO WAS CAST OUT!"**

Yoshiharu Noda used to be the CEO of an adult talent agency called Yellow Cab. However, though he was a good businessman, he overstepped his bounds. He started issuing stock to some of the actresses without permission from the parent company, which led to a lawsuit. As a result, in 2004, at an extraordinary shareholders' meeting, Noda was given the boot.

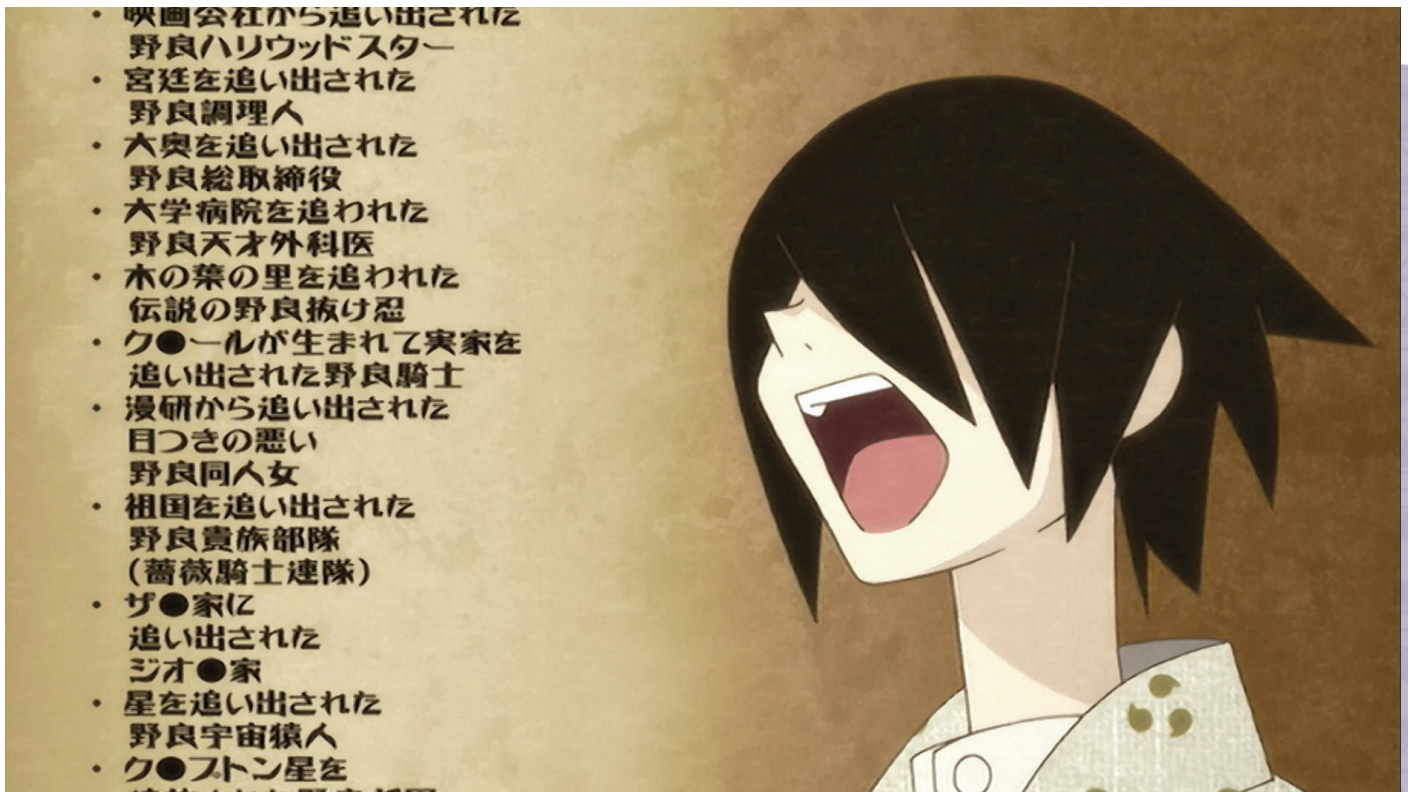
## **"A STRAY F1 DRIVER WHO LOST HIS SEAT!"**

The world of F1 racing is very competitive, and there are many drivers who qualify one year but don't make it the next. But this is most likely meant to be Hideki Noda, a professional racer who debuted in the 1994 European Grand Prix. He was doing his best to qualify in 1995 as well, but Simtek, the company he was racing for, went bankrupt that year. Without a sponsor, his short F1 career came to an abrupt end.

## **"A STRAY CULT?!"**

These people in white rain ponchos are from an organization called the Pana-Wave Laboratory. It started in 1977 as a mix of Christianity, Buddhism and New Age ideals, but in the 1980s, a subgroup calling themselves the Scientific Faction started talking about the dangers of electromagnetic waves. They wore nothing but white - usually white hoods, white coats, white surgical masks, and white boots. In March of 2003, they tried to capture Tama-chan (the seal mentioned in an earlier liner note), because they thought that electromagnetic doomsday (predicted to be May 14th, 2003) could be avoided if the seal was returned to his natural habitat. Clashes between the Pana-Wave Laboratory, the media, and police only increased as May drew near, but then when May 15th arrived and the world was still intact, interest quickly faded.

## "I'VE LOST HOPE IN THIS "OUT WITH THE ONI!" SOCIETY..."



Nozomu delivers this episode's first big list!

- **Stray band members cast out by the vocalist:** Hound Dog is a popular Japanese rock band that formed in 1976. (Anime fans might know them best for their song "R★O★C★K★S", which was used as the first opening for Naruto.) Originally, the band had six members. But in 2006, lead vocalist Kohei Otomo basically fired all the other members, and turned Hound Dog into a solo group. (Many lawsuits followed.)

- **Stray idols cast out of Mor\*\*\*\* Musume:** Morning Musume is a pop idol group that is constantly losing old members and gaining new ones. It's so built into the DNA of the band that fans call each successive cast change "generations" and number them accordingly. As of this writing, Morning Musume is on Generation 17.

- **Stray movie stars cast out of movie companies:** In 2006, Paramount Pictures announced that they were ending their 14-year relationship with movie superstar Tom Cruise. His advocating for Scientology and criticism of psychiatry had caused his public approval rating to drop to around 35%, and the studio wanted no part of it. He wouldn't be gone long, though. After a brief stint with United Artists, Tom Cruise returned to Paramount in 2010, just in time to star in Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol.

- **Stray chefs cast out of court:** The 2003 Korean drama Jewel in the Palace tells the story of a woman named Seo Jang-geum. An orphan from a young age, she becomes a cook at the royal palace, and even becomes a physician to the royal family. However, when the king eventually falls ill with a malady that she can't cure, he tells her to escape with her lover Min Jeong-ho. The two run off and live as fugitives for eight years.

- **Stray court ladies cast out of the shogun's harem:** This is a reference to the Ejima-Ikushima Incident of 1714. At that time, the Tokugawa shogun's harem was housed in a complex called the Oooku, where the gates were locked at night. On February 26th, a high-ranking



woman named Ejima left the complex to visit the grave of a previous shogun, on behalf of her superior. But afterwards, she went to a kabuki play starring the popular actor Ikushima Shingorou. There was a party after the play, and Ejima stayed so late that she missed the Ooku's curfew and got locked out. This had far-reaching consequences - Ejima became the center of a power struggle between her superior and another noblewoman, who themselves became the center of a power struggle between factions in the royal court. In the end, Ejima was sent off to a castle in Shinano Province, Ikushima was banished to the remote island of Miyake, and Ikushima's theater troupe was disbanded.

• **Stray genius surgeons cast out of university hospitals:** In the manga series Dr. Kotou's Clinic, brilliant surgeon Kensuke Goto is let go from his position at a university hospital in Tokyo after making a mistake which led to the death of a patient. He ends up moving down to a remote island in southern Japan, and becoming the doctor for a small village.

• **Stray fugitive ninjas cast out of Hidden Leaf Villages:** Orochimaru, a villain from the Naruto series, was driven out of the Hidden Leaf Village after it was discovered that he was experimenting on humans in a quest to develop more powerful techniques.

• **Stray knights cast out of their homes when \*\*gelo is born:** One of the major antagonists in Dragon Quest VIII is a dark-haired man named Marcello. His father was a rich (yet cruel) man who slept with a maid. For a time, Marcello was raised as the family heir. But eventually, the rich man finally conceived a son with his actual wife, and named the boy Angelo. Marcello and his mother were then banished from the house and left destitute, with nowhere to go. A group of monks at an abbey took them in, and Marcello grew up to be a Captain of the Templar Knights.

• **Stray scary dojin girls cast out of Manga Research Clubs:** This is Chika Ogiue, the combative otaku-hater from the manga and anime series Genshiken. She got kicked out of the Manga Research Club after fighting with the other female members, but she eventually went on to become the fifth president of the Genshiken club.

• **Noble knight regiments cast out of their homelands (Rosen Ritter Regiment):** In the long-running series The Legend of the Galactic Heroes, there was a special infantry regiment called the Rosen Ritter (German for "Knight of the Roses"). It was an exceptionally strong group comprised of former Imperial citizens and their families.

• **Stray Zeo\* families cast out by the Zab\*s:** In the world of the original Mobile Suit Gundam, people who lived in space colonies were originally under the control of the Earth Federation. But a man named Zeon Zum Deikun thought the colonies should be free. He became the leader of the colonies at Side 3, declared independence... and then suddenly died. Zeon's close friend, Degwin Sodo Zabi, claimed that Zeon had named him his successor just before his death. He took over leadership of the Republic of Zeon, placed his children in key leadership positions, and proceeded to kill off all of Zeon's closest supporters, including his family. But Zeon's two children escaped, and one of them eventually became the infamous Char Aznable.

• **Stray space ape-men cast out of the solar system:** The villain in the 1971 tokusatsu series Spectreman was a mad scientist named Dr. Gori. He had the face of a gorilla but the body of a man, and a big blonde mop of hair on his head. He was banished from his home planet, Planet E, after trying and failing to conquer it.

• **Stray generals cast out of Kr\*pton:** General Zod, the megalomaniacal villain from the Superman comics, was originally in charge of the military on Krypton. Eventually, he had the bright idea to take over the world using an army of robot clones. It did not end well for him, and he was exiled to a prison dimension called the Phantom Zone.

• **Stray daimyou cast out of Kai Province by their own sons:** Nobutora Takeda was a daimyou during the Sengoku period. Together with his oldest son, Shingen, Nobutora won many battles. However, Nobutora didn't care much for Shingen, and instead wanted to pass on leadership of the clan to one of his younger sons, Nobushige. So, in 1540, Shingen overthrew his own father, and exiled him to the province of Suruga.

• **Stray families cast out of Fuji:** The Fujisankei Communications Group is a media conglomerate comprised of the radio stations Nippon Broadcasting System and Nippon Cultural Broadcasting, the TV station Fuji Television, and the newspaper Sankei Shimbun. This huge company was founded by Nobutaka Shikanai in 1967. By the time 1985 rolled around, Nobutaka was ready to retire, so he handed over chairmanship to his son, Haruo Shikanai. However, Haruo died suddenly in 1988, so Nobutaka's son-in-law Hiroaki was eventually put in charge. Unfortunately, Hiroaki started messing around with company money, and in 1992, he ended up getting publically dismissed as chairman of the Sankei Shimbun. The rest of the companies quickly followed suit, and just like that, the Shikanai family were no longer a part of Fujisankei.

• **Stray leaders cast out of their countries by the Communist Party:** As the Chinese Civil War came to an end in the late 1940s, Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Kuomintang, lost key battles against Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party, and was forced to flee to the island of Taiwan. The Kuomintang was the ruling party in the Republic of China when the UN was founded, and even after his retreat to Taiwan, Kai-shek's Republic of China was internationally considered to be the sole legitimate government of China. But in 1971, when Chiang Kai-shek refused to accept dual representation at the UN with the communist government now controlling the mainland, the Republic of China was expelled from the UN, and the mainland government officially became "China" to the rest of the world.

• **Stray second sons cast out by General Secretaries:** This is most likely referring to Kim Jong-nam, who was actually the eldest son of North Korean General Secretary Kim Jong-il. In 2001, Kim Jong-nam tried to visit Tokyo Disneyland using a fake passport, and got caught. A North Korean leader succumbing to the allure of Western culture was seen as a highly embarrassing incident, so Kim Jong-il exiled Kim Jong-nam and cut him out of the family. But even though Kim Jong-nam left North Korea, trouble still followed him. His own younger brother, Kim Jong-un, didn't want any competition for the seat of power. Several assassination attempts were ordered on Jong-nam's life, and eventually, in 2017, Kim Jong-nam was killed at an airport in Malaysia.

• **Stray Joneses cast out of the Stones (not Norah Jones):** Brian Jones founded the popular British rock band the Rolling Stones in 1962, at the age of 20. But over the next few years, Jones developed serious problems with drug and alcohol abuse, which were impacting the band's ability to record and go on tour. In June of 1969, three other members of the group - Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Charlie Watts - sat Brian down and told him that he would no longer be a part of the band which he himself had



formed. (Norah Jones, meanwhile, is an American pop artist who debuted in 2002 to much success, both in the US and abroad.)

- **Stray cats with a fish in their mouth, cast out of the Isono house:** The star of anime's longest-running series Sazae-san is named Sazae Fuguta, but her maiden name is Sazae Isono. And in the opening sequence for Sazae-san, she chases off a cat who has nabbed a giant fish which the family was presumably going to have for dinner.

- **Stray manga artists cast out of their magazines:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, Kouji Kumeta was originally affiliated with Weekly Shounen Sunday, but ended up publishing Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei in Weekly Shounen Magazine.

**"WE DON'T NEED YOU."**



As Nozomu receives rejection after rejection, he goes through many different teacher's offices. One of them has a big calendar on the wall, labeled "February Events". There are three dates with notes written on them:

- **February 6th: Na\*\* Mizuki CD release:** February 6, 2008 was the release date of Nana Mizuki's 17th single, "Starcamp EP". It contained four songs, two of which were the opening ending themes for the anime Rosario to Vampire.

- **February 14th: Ai\*e5 Live DVD:** Likewise, February 14th, 2008 was the release date for Aice5 Final Party: Last Aice5 in Yokohama Arena. It was a concert DVD with video from pop group Aice5's last tour before they disbanded in September 2007.

- **February 15th - 19th: I want to rest:** Me too, buddy. Me too.

## WAKKANAI

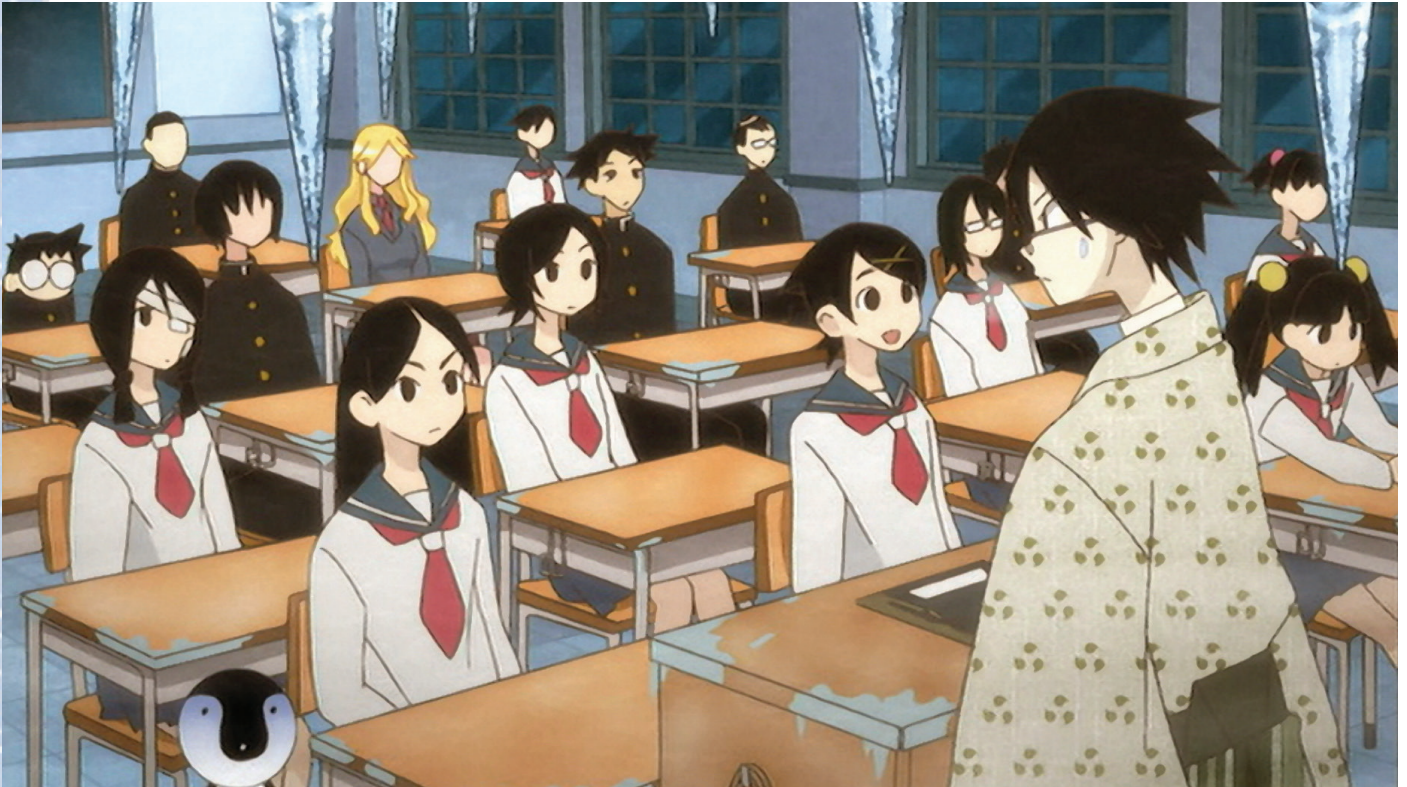
Wakkanai is a real place. It's the northernmost city in Japan, up at the tip of Hokkaido.

## NO NUDITY

For more than 1,000 years, the Kokuseki-ji Temple has held a winter festival called Somin-sai. On a chilly day in February, throngs of men in loincloths pour cold water over themselves to drive away bad luck, and compete with each other to grab a “Somin Bag” which is said to bring good fortune.

However, in 2008, Japan Railways banned posters advertising the event, after receiving complaints that the ads felt like “sexual harassment”. They featured a man with a big beard and a hairy chest howling into the air, and behind him was a line of men with their buttocks facing the camera.

## STRAY STUDENTS



Nozomu's students aren't the only ones who have followed him up north. Kaizou Katsu and Chitan Tsubouchi from *Katte ni Kaizou* are sitting dutifully at the back of the classroom.

## JIRASE 2

This ship is a spoof on a real icebreaker named the Shirase. Operated by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, the Shirase's hull number was 5002, and it served from 1982 all the way to 2008.

There was a ship with a 5001 hull number, though: the Shirase's predecessor, another icebreaker named Fuji.

## "WHAT IS THIS, THE ANTARCTICA MOVIE?!"

The little subplot about Nozomu being lost in a frozen wasteland until his “owners” return is a play on the 1983 Japanese film *Antarctica*. It's about a group of men with the Japanese Antarctic Surveying Team, and their team of fifteen sled dogs. Since they're at the end of their mission, the men leave their dogs behind at the base, intending for a second research group to arrive shortly and pick up where they left off. But the weather turns exceptionally bad,

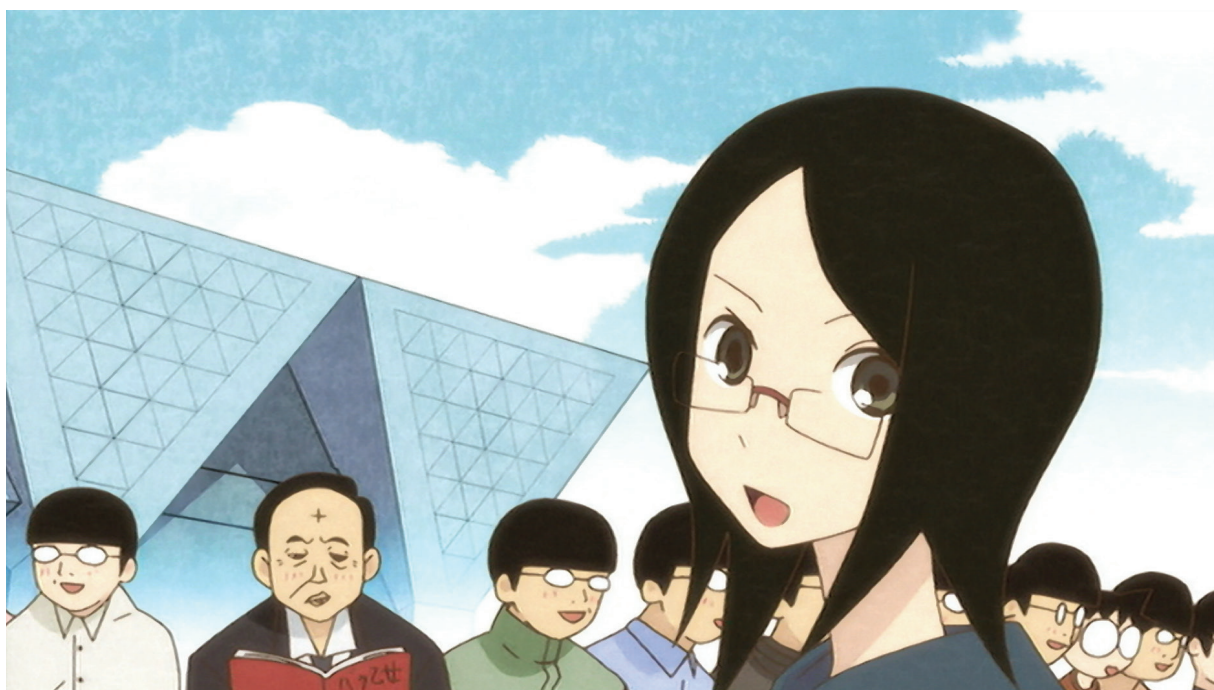


and the icebreaker carrying the second research group is unable to make it through. Running low on fuel and fresh water, they're forced to return to Japan and leave the dogs behind to their doom.

When a new research team arrives at the base eleven months later, one of the dog handlers from the first expedition comes along with them, intending to bury his dogs. But to his and everyone's surprise, two of the dogs have lived almost a year in the Antarctic wilderness and survived. The handler and his pets are happily reunited.

This movie is actually based on real events. There was a scientific expedition in 1958 where the dogs had to be left behind, but two of them, Taro and Jiro, miraculously survived. Both of them have now long since died, but their bodies have been preserved. Taro is on display at Hokkaido University, and Jiro can be seen at the National Museum of Nature and Science in Ueno.

## **"WHEN MAKUHARI MESSE CAST OUT ITS ONI..."**



For a short while, from the end of 1989 through 1990, Comiket was held at Makuari Messe, a convention center just outside Tokyo. However, some of the raunchier doujinshi ran afoul of local pornography laws, so Comiket was cast out back to Harumi, from whence it came.

By the way, the building in the background is Tokyo Big Sight, the place where Comiket was held starting in 1996. And if you look at the people standing in line, you'll see everyone's favorite manga-loving politician Tarou Asou, along with Chitan Tsubouchi from *Katte ni Kaizou*.

## **SEARCH AND DESTROY**

The Japanese term used here is "manteki hissatsu", which literally means, "if you see an enemy, be sure to kill it." It's a phrase that goes all the way back to the Imperial Japanese Navy. The closest English equivalent is "search and destroy", a term usually associated with the strategy employed by the US military during the Vietnam War.

## **TSUTAYA**

Tsutaya was an actual Edo-period publishing house which specialized in ukiyo-e woodblock prints from famous artists like Utamaro and Sharaku.

**"THAT IS NO GOOD. WHEN IT COMES TO DOUJINSHI, ONLY MEGURO WILL DO."**

Jun's story is a twisted retelling of the famous rakugo skit Meguro no Sanma, mentioned in a previous liner note. In the original version, a feudal lord is enamored with grilled fish; in Jun's version, a princess is enamored with risqué doujinshi.

### **THE TECHNOLOGY APPARENTLY EXISTS...**

This giant clump of Lupin-style text is from a blog ran by an author who calls himself "Onishi Kagaku" ("kagaku" meaning "science"). The blog was filled with hundreds of entries about various scientific observations and speculations, with a bit of fiction mixed in - and it was all eventually rewritten into a collection of light novels called Jonpei and I. The Jonpei series was set in a world where everyone had at least some proficiency with magic, so scientific progress was slightly behind where it is in real life.

### **DAIDOJI SHINSUKE: THE EARLY VOICE**

This episode title is a riff on Ryuunosuke Akutagawa's 1925 novel Daidoji Shinsuke: The Early Years.

### **ZUNDA HALF-BROTHERS**

The poster on Meru's wall is a play on "The Three Dango Brothers", an incredibly popular children's song from 1999. It debuted at number one on the Oricon charts, and ended up selling around 3 million copies.

Dango are little balls made out of mochi which are served on a skewer, usually in groups of three. Zunda are also little balls of mochi, but they're covered in a green paste made of crushed edamame beans and usually served on a plate. It's a popular dish in northeastern Japan.

### **MADE FOR THIS**

There are a lot of people standing in line to audition for Meru's voice role, but some of them are particularly qualified: they're VOCALOIDs, the characters who represent various voice banks in Yamaha's famous voice synthesizer software.

The first two we see are Rin and Len, a boy/girl pair who look like they might be twins (though their relationship has never been specified). Here in Zetsu-bou-sensei, they have red hair and blue-and-white uniforms, but the actual VOCALOID characters have blonde hair and black-and-white uniforms.

Further down the line, there's Kaito, a man with a long coat and scarf. As a VOCALOID his hair and scarf are blue and his coat is white, but here his hair and scarf have been changed to green, and his coat is now grey.

Even further to the left, we can see a VOCALOID named Meiko, and she actually hasn't been changed that much. She still has her short blonde hair and red crop top/miniskirt combo.

Behind Meiko is a bipedal bear wearing clothes. This is a reference to Kuma Uta, a 2003 video game for the PlayStation 2. It stars a polar bear who leaves nature behind to become an enka singer. As the player, you help him write songs, and he dresses up and "sings" them - though his performance is done using a synthesized, robotic voice.



## **"I AM A THOUSAND PIECES OF TRASH..."**

The first candidate, a man in a suit with messy hair, is meant to be Japanese singer Masafumi Akikawa. In 2006, he released a single called "Sen no Kaze ni Natte", which ended up selling over a million copies.

His song was based on Clare Harner's famous 1934 poem, Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep. So the first line of the song, "sen no kaze in natte", is a Japanese translation of the first line of the poem, "I am the thousand winds that blow". However, here the line has been changed to "sen no gomi ni natte" - "I am a thousand pieces of trash."

## **"YO! I'M OTONASHI MERU!"**



The second candidate is a lovely little old woman delivering a line in a rough, slangy accent. This is a parody of Masako Nozawa, the elderly woman who has been voicing Goku, the musclebound main character of Dragon Ball, for almost 40 years.

## **"BLAH BLAH, BLAH BLAH."**

The third candidate is a stereotypical foreigner. He has blonde hair and a big nose, and he's saying "perapera", which is an onomatopoeic word for speaking a foreign language.

## **"HOW-DO-YOU-DO, I-AM-OTONASHI-MERU."**

Some other VOCALOIDs showed up earlier in the skit, but now the queen herself has appeared: Hatsune Miku. This girl with blue-green pigtails wasn't the first VOCALOID, but her incredible popularity led to her becoming the most well-known mascot for the software.

## **"HEY, I'M MERU."**

Maeda-kun is submitting an audition, too! Although he seems to be holding his script upside-down. The cover says "BS11", which is the channel name for Nippon BS Broadcasting, a private satellite broadcasting station which aired Zoku Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei.

## PERFECT PITCH, THE BAD KIND

The Japanese term written here is “dame zettaionkan”, a term that Kouji Kumeta coined in volume 17 of *Katte ni Kaizou*. It literally means “bad perfect pitch”, and refers to the experience of always subconsciously equating an actor’s voice with a particular role. For example, Takehito Koyasu is an incredibly prolific voice actor, so odds are good that you heard him voice a different character before you heard him play Nozomu’s brother Kei. Did you hear Kei speak in this show, and immediately associate that voice with one of Takehito Koyasu’s other roles, like Dio from *Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure*, or Gin Dojima from *Food Wars*? If so, you experienced *dame zettaionkan*.

## TROLL HOUSE

There’s a pun at work here. The sign says “Boroku-sou”, and the way it’s written (ぼろく荘), it means “Boroku House”. But if we instead take “borokusou” to be all one word and write it this way (ぼろ糞), it means “worthless” or “disparaging”. In online terms, it’s used to describe people who say terrible things - in other words, trolls.

## CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

As Meru types up a scathing message for Majiru, the predictive text function on her phone is trying to fill in the words for her. However, some of the suggestions are a little strange. When she types “doko” (“where”), it offers these words:

- Doko da (“where are you?”)
- Doko de (“where did it happen?”)
- Dokodoko (“somewhere”)
- Dokonjou (“gutsy”)

When she types the “bo” in “boke” (“moron”), these are the phone’s suggestions:

- Boku (“I”)
- Bousatsu (“beaten to death”)
- Bottakuri (“clip joint”)
- Botton (“plop”)
- Buono (Italian for “wonderful”)

And when she finishes typing “boke”, the phone makes these last few guesses:

- Boketa (“went senile”)
- Bokechatta (“went senile, unfortunately”)
- Boketsu (“grave”)
- Boketoru (“out of touch”)



## "I SUPPOSE THE THING I'M MOST AFRAID OF IS BEING ADAPTED INTO AN ANIME."

Jun’s second performance is another *rakugo* parody. This time, he’s spoofing a story called “Manju Kowai” (“I’m Afraid of Manju”). It starts with five friends chatting about what they like. But suddenly, the conversation shifts into talking about what they don’t like. The quietest friend, sitting in the corner, admits that he’s afraid of manju - white cakes filled with sweet red bean paste. The others are all shocked, and the quiet friend asks if they can all please stop talking about it.



Later, the other four friends decide to pick on their quiet, manju-fearing buddy. So they buy a bunch a manju, and then throw them at him! But the joke's on them; their buddy is smiling and snacking on the manju they just threw. Flustered, the friends concede defeat. "All right, you tricked us. But tell us, what are you actually afraid of?" And between bites of manju, the quiet friend answers, "Right now, I think I'm really scared of a cup of tea."

## HOKUEI HIGH SCHOOL

Today, the school is named after Yukino's highly competitive high school from the popular late 90's manga/anime His and Her Circumstances.

## MARCH 26, 2\*\*8 A DAY OF DESTINY! COURT CASE LOST!

March 26th, 2008 was the release date for the special edition of Zoku Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei DVD 1.

## 140KG → 77KG

In early 2008, a magazine called Quarterly Ace reported that Zetsubou-sensei's director, Akiyuki Shinbo, had gone from 140kg (~309 lbs.) down to 77kg (~170 lbs.) since he started working on Zetsubou-sensei. That means he lost over 130 lbs.! Details on his weight loss journey are slim, but it was jokingly claimed that he went on a "Despair Diet", aka "losing weight from not eating anything because you're depressed".

## (ASSUMING THAT WE ARE) BROTHER AND SISTER

This episode title is a play on Muro Saisei's 1934 novel, Brother and Sister.

## THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Right after the title card, we see a giant, text-filled poster on the classroom wall. Though some of the text is obscured, it's clearly a note from the animation staff:

*There have been fewer and fewer sponsors, so the same commercials keep playing over and over again.*

*They wanted to do Kaizou as a one-shot series, but... Usually the scriptwriter's royalties are based on the original work, so... ..but the meaning isn't really clear. A three-part series takes 1.3 times more effort, even though it seems like it's three times harder. Making the ending and opening is what's putting pressure on development of the main show.*

*Right now we're working hard on Hidamari. Is Chiri going to have a ton of lines again?*

The bit about "1.3 times more effort, even though it seems like it's three times harder" is an off-hand reference to Char Aznable of Mobile Suit Gundam fame. His red mobile suit, a Zaku II, was originally said to be "three times faster" than other mobile suits. However, as the series went on, it was clear that being "three times faster" would make it faster than other, newer mobile suits that were being introduced in the followup series, Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam. So the stat was retconned, and the official word became that Char's Zaku was 1.3 times (30%) faster, and thanks to Char's piloting skills, it just seemed like he was moving three times faster.

To the left of the paper on the wall, there's a note on the blackboard as well. Again, it's partially obscured, but this is what can be seen:

Monster Hunter Festa  
Team Shaft will be participating  
Our goal: to get through the qualifying round

This is referring to the Monster Hunter Festival, which is an annual convention held by Capcom, the creators of the Monster Hunter series of games. There are floor shows, carnival games, people in Monster Hunter costumes, and also a huge Monster Hunter tournament. Sounds like a group from SHAFT decided to go for the gold in 2008!

## "DON'T ASSUME THAT THEY'LL EVEN MAKE IT PAST THE FIRST ROUND!"

Just in case it isn't clear, they're talking about Japan's chances at the World Cup. In 2006, the general sentiment was that it was hopeless. Japan did make it to the World Cup, but they lost every game in the tournament and went home without a single win.

## I WANNA BE FRIENDS WITH KYOTO ANI\*\*\*\*\*

The censored name is Kyoto Animation, an animation studio known for its high production values and the positive treatment of its staff, who are all salaried rather than freelance workers. What's more, at the time this episode aired in 2008, Kyoto Animation was riding high on successful series like The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya, Lucky Star, and Clannad.

## OUSEDA UNIVERSITY

This is a mashup of two real-life universities: Keio University and Waseda University, both prestigious private schools located in Tokyo.

## HOUSING INDUSTRY

The text on this sign actually says "Complaint Industry", which is a derogatory term for the housing industry. It's based on the unfortunate experience of complaining to one's landlord about something that's broken, and then the landlord summarily ignoring it.

## TAKE YOUR PICK



"LDK" is a Japanese housing term meaning "includes a living room, dining room, and kitchen". This plus a number will tell you how many rooms the apartment has, along with which amenities. So, for exam-



ple, “1LDK” means “one room, with a living room, dining room, and kitchen” (in other words, a studio apartment). “2DK” means “two rooms, with a dining room and kitchen”. And so on.

However, some of the listings on the bulletin board here seem a little... sketchy.

- **TDL No Vacancy:** “TDL” isn’t a housing term - it’s the acronym for Tokyo Disneyland. And apparently the park is full.
- **RX-75:** “RX-75” is the model number for the Guntank, a mobile suit from the original Mobile Suit Gundam that had tank treads instead of legs.
- **0080:** Another Gundam reference, this time for the 1989 OVA series Mobile Suit Gundam 0080: War in the Pocket.
- **130R Hong Kong:** The Japanese comedy duo 130R consists of Itsuji Itao and a man who calls himself “Hong Kong” (though his real name is Takahiro Kurano).
- **175R Children Allowed:** 175R is a Japanese ska punk band from Kitakyushu that formed in 2001. In 2004, the band’s lead vocalist SHOGO married Eriko Imai, a vocalist with the pop group SPEED - but unfortunately it was a shotgun wedding, since Eriko was already pregnant. The relationship didn’t last long, and the two divorced in 2007.

## SADAOKA TRADING CO., LTD.

There’s a little joke hidden in here. In Japanese, “Sadaoka Trading Co.” is “Sadaoka Shouji” (定岡商事). But if you change the last two kanji, you get Sadaoka Shouji (定岡正二), the name of a baseball player with the Yomiuri Giants who retired in 1985 and went on to become a TV sportscaster.

**“OH! YOU’RE JUST THE MAN I WANTED TO SEE, ZETSUBOU-SENSEI!”**



The blonde man running the fashion shop looks just like Oshare-sensei (“Mr. Stylish”), another of Kouji Kumeta’s characters from *Katte ni Kaizou*.

“Oshare-sensei” is just a nickname, though. The character’s real name is Mario Biyoshino. And here he’s running a store called Style Shop Luigi, making this an obvious reference to Mario and Luigi, the stars of Nintendo’s Mario Brothers series of games. In fact, if you look closely, you can see Luigi’s hat and moustache displayed on a mannequin head on one of the shelves to the left.

## FLASHING SIGNS



When the “soon to be married” couple appears, the camera flashes wildly up the screen twice. If you view it frame by frame, you can see a blue awning which says “Television Announcer - Mirror”, a blue sign that says “Cooking Show”, and a white sign that says “Ayu Shop”.

The blue awning and sign are a reference to Sousuke Sumitani, a former announcer with Nippon Television. At one point, he was part of a popular program called Docchi no Ryouru Shou (“Which Cooking Show”). But in 2006, he was prosecuted for voyeurism after looking up a high school girl’s skirt.

“Ayu Shop”, meanwhile, is a reference to Yuu Abiru. (The word “Ayu” is written on the sign as “A優”, using the same kanji that appears in Yuu Abiru’s name: あびる優.) If you recall from a previous liner note, Yuu Abiru was an actress who appeared on a TV show called Truth or Doubt, where she confessed to breaking into warehouses with her friends, then stealing the products inside.

## LUXURY GOODS

The license plate number on the rich man’s car is 663613. Using goroawase, that number can be read as “ro-ru-su ro-i-su”, or “Rolls Royce”, the British luxury car brand.

Also, the logo on the woman’s bag is a spoof on the logo for Chanel, a French fashion house known for its expensive clothes and accessories.

## PARKING VIOLATION 24/7, NO MERCY

In Japan, parking in no-parking zones used to be seen as “okay”, as long as you did it for 30 minutes or less. But in 2006, the Road Traffic Act was revised and the laws were tightened. From that point forward, any parking in no-parking zones, no matter how short, could be subject to punishment.



## **HOLLYWOOD ACTRESSES, YAMA\*\*\*\* MOE, THEY'RE ALL THE SAME!**

Moe Yamaguchi is a TV personality who married Shigeo Ozeki, a wealthy IT mogul. Nozomu is being a little prescient, here - the two did end up getting divorced, but not until 2011, long after this episode aired.

## **"LOOK! THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO ACT BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS!"**

As Nozomu says this, there are a line of shops in the background. From left to right, they're "Pond Bag", "West", and "Gate Park".

The Japanese word for "pond" is "ike", and the word for "bag" is "fukuro". Put everything together (with some rendaku for the compound word) and you get Ikebukuro West Gate Park, the name of a series of mystery novels written by Ira Ishida. They were adapted into a live-action TV drama in 2000, and in 2020, an anime version was made.

## **"MANSEIBASHI-KUN?"**



Though he's never been properly introduced, this student's name is Wataru Manseibashi. It means "crossing the Manseibashi bridge", which is how you would reach Akihabara after traveling to the (now defunct) Manseibashi railway station.

## **FRESH FROM THE BARGAIN BIN**

The "low budget anime DVDs" that Wataru has as examples are "Mister Princess" and "A Girl in an Intermediate Grade". The first is a play on Sister Princess, a light novel series that got an anime adaptation in 2001. And the second is a play on Kakyuusei ("Underclassman"), a dating sim that was made into an adult OVA in 1998, and a regular anime series one year later.

(The kanji for "underclassman" is 下級生. For this parody version, the first kanji has been changed to make 中級生, which isn't a real word. But if we combine the meanings of the individual kanji themselves, it would be something like "a student in an intermediate grade".)

## OBJET D'ART

There are several posters hanging on the walls in the tsundere café, and of course, they're all anime-related.

The first poster we see is a promotional poster from minori's PC game *Ef: A Fairy Tale of the Two*. If you recall, SHAFT did the anime adaptation of that work, *Ef: A Tale of Memories*. Next, after we're introduced to the "17 year old", there are two brightly colored posters on the wall. The one on the left, with the woman in the red dress holding a long sword, is a spoof on the early 90s manga/anime series *Ghost Sweeper Mikami*. And on the right, the picture of a girl with wings is a parody of *Zettai Karen Children* (known in the US as *Psychic Squad*), a 2005 manga that got an anime version in 2008.

And finally, right before Lee appears, there are two more posters up on the wall. These are both promotional wallpapers for *Zettai Karen Children* that Weekly Shounen Sunday made available for download on their official website.

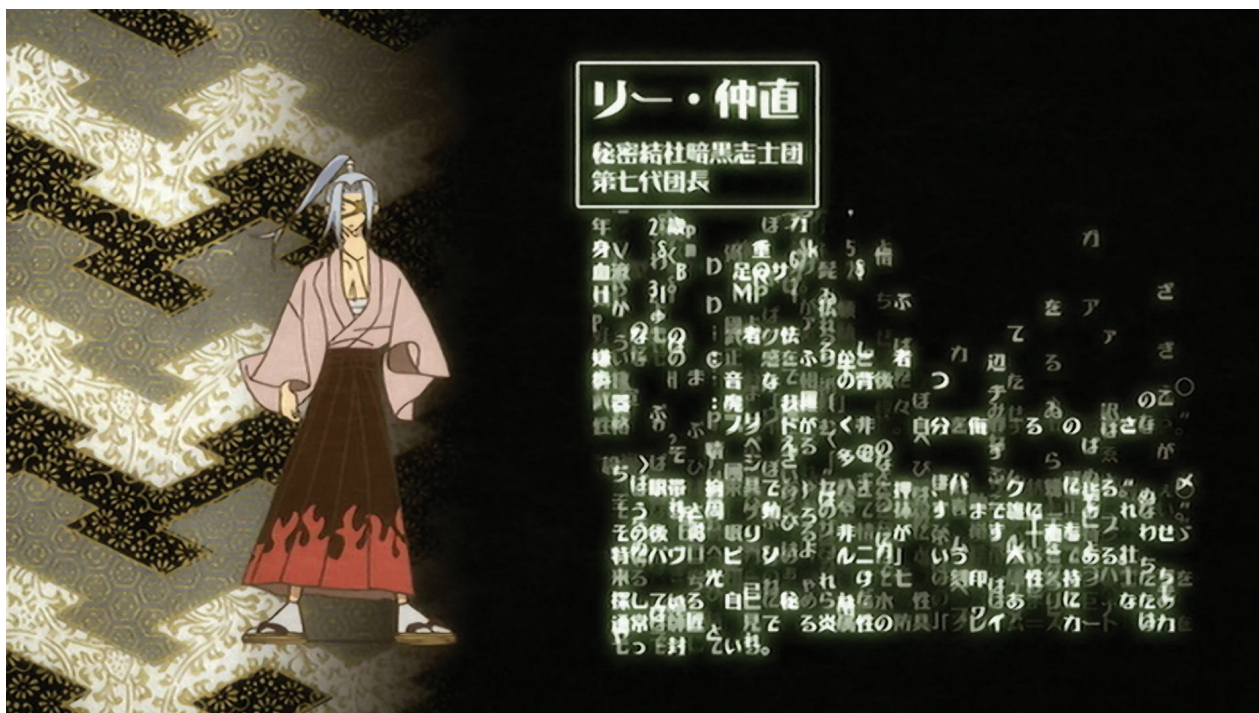
### "THAT WOMAN OF A CERTAIN AGE IS 17?!"

Nozomu refers to the lady as "myourei" (妙齡), which means "a woman in the prime of her youth". However, if you look at the two kanji that make up the word, their literal meanings are "strange" and "age". So there's a subtle joke here that "there's something off about her age".

### "THE WORLD HAS NO NEED OF TWO HOPELESS BOXING SUCCESSORS."

This line is reference to the classic 80's series *Fist of the North Star*. In that story, the main character Kenshiro was chosen as the successor of the deadly martial art Hokuto Shinken, even though he was the youngest among his four brothers. This didn't sit well with Raoh, the eldest brother.

### HELLO AND GOODBYE TO LEE NAKANAO



Lee Nakanao's biography drips down the screen similar to the iconic text in the 1999 film *The Matrix*. Here's what it says:

**Lee Nakanao**  
**Secret Society of Dark Patriots Brigade - Seventh Generation Leader**



**Age:** 26

**Height:** 181cm **Weight:** 68kg

**Blood Type:** AB **Shoe Size:** 27

**HP:** 217 **MP:** 17

**Likes:** Watching his enemies tremble in fear

**Dislikes:** Those who fight for justice

**Good at:** Silently sneaking up behind his enemies

**Weapon:** The Magic Blade “Garasha”

**Personality:** Extremely proud. Coldhearted. Takes insults personally.

**Description:** His eye patch is actually a restraint device, and if he takes it off, he goes berserk. When that happens, he kills anything that moves and no one can stop him. Afterwards, he sleeps for three days and three nights. Even though he’s coldhearted, he’s still an art lover. He especially likes Pablo Picasso’s painting “Guernica”.

In order to settle the score with the Demon Light Gang, Lee is searching for warriors with seven marks and attributes. His own secret attribute is water, and it’s so strong that he usually wears a flame skirt to conceal his power. The skirt is a memento from his master.

## **ANNE OF GREEN FABLES**

This next-episode preview is a spoof on Lucy Maud Montgomery’s famous 1908 children’s novel *Anne of Green Gables*. However, while the original is about a young girl spreading innocent joy, the Zetsubou-sensei version of Anne seems to be spreading communism.

It’s also worth noting that the original *Anne of Green Gables* took place on Prince Edward Island. The kanji for island is 島, which can be pronounced “tou”; but here it’s been swapped out for 党, which is also pronounced “tou”, but means “political party”.

**[GOKU.] SAYONARA,  
ZETSUBOU-SENSEI**

# **EPISODE 1**

## **THE ZETSUBOU-SENSEI DRAWING SONG, AGAIN**

This episode opens with a new version of the Zetsubou-sensei Drawing Song from episode 7. Last time it was Chiri and Jun performing the skit, but this time it's Nami and Kafuka's turn to show off their drawing skills - literally! The two pictures on the artboard were drawn by Ryouko Shintani and Ai Nonaka, Nami and Kafuka's voice actresses.

## **KABU HIGH SCHOOL**

Today, the school is named after the school in Mr. Fullswing, a baseball comedy manga from 2001 by Suzuki Shinya.

## **THE SWEET GIRL**

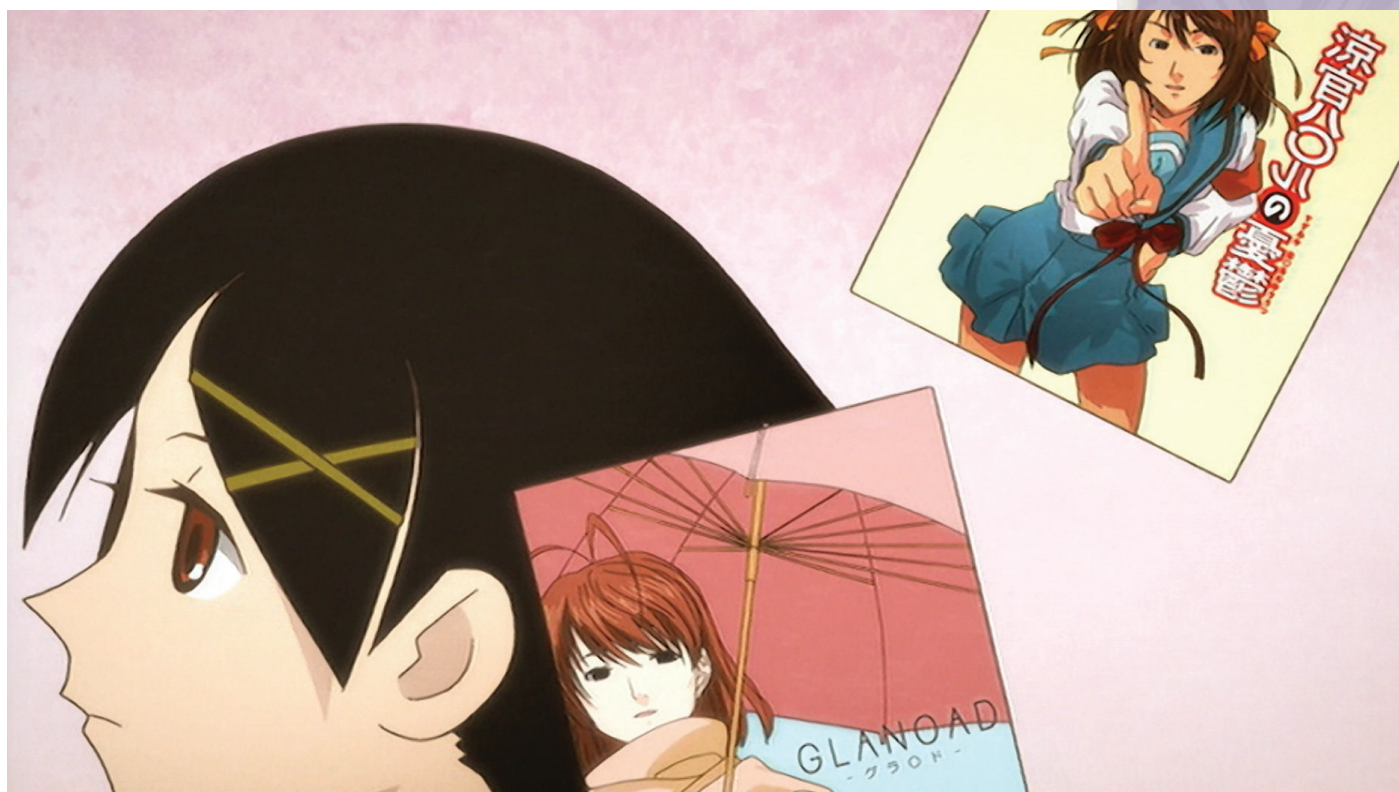
This episode's title is a play on The Dancing Girl, a short story written in 1890 by the surgeon and author Mori Oogai.

## **"...THANKS TO A CERTAIN COUNTRY'S NIANGNIANGS."**

In Chinese, "niangniang" is an honorific term for a woman, usually used in reference to a goddess. But here, it's referring to sexy female spies who use their bodies as bait to ensare government officials.



## PALE IMITATIONS



As Kafuka is waxing poetic about anime and video games saving the country of Japan, two posters appear alongside her. They're supposed to be posters for *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* and *Clannad*, but these are very obviously bootlegs. On the top poster, the word "Haruhi" is spelled wrong; it's censored in the middle, the second and third letters have been swapped, and the last letter is written backwards. *Clannad* doesn't fare much better, with its title having been twisted into "Glanoad".

## A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE



None of the otaku elite have time for Kaere. They're all focused on a nearby TV, which is showing Shana's fight against a copy of Bel Peol in episode 2 of *Shakugan no Shana Second*.

## "DIRECTOR-GENERAL!"

The politician with the rosy cheeks who appears in the shadows is meant to be Shigeru Ishiba. In 2008, when this episode was released he was Japan's Minister of Defense.

## CRACK DOWN ON TIBET CULTURAL REVOLUTION

And the mysterious man in glasses who's coordinating the spy effort is meant to be Hu Jintao. In 2008, he was the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. If it wasn't clear before which country was being parodied as the spies in this episode, this should be the final clue that gives it away.

"Crack Down on Tibet" refers to China and Tibet's contentious history. In September of 1949, the Chinese Communist Party declared that they would incorporate Tibet, Taiwan, Hainan Island, and the Penghu Islands, whether peacefully or by force. The CCP approached Tibet with negotiations, claiming that they would liberate the Tibetans; but the Tibetans responded that there was no need to liberate them, since there were no foreign powers in Tibet to be liberated from. China then mobilized their troops, still fresh from the Chinese Civil War, and invaded and captured the Chamdo region of Tibet. The Dalai Lama was eventually driven out of the country, and China dissolved Tibet's government. Since that day, over 1 million Tibetans have died due to forced labor, imprisonment, and starvation. There have been many Tibetan protests since then, most notably uprisings in 1989 and 2008, but they all ended in violence, destruction, and martial law. As of this writing, Tibet remains under Chinese control.

As for the Cultural Revolution, that was Chairman Mao's plan for purging capitalism from China. In 1966, he put out a call for violent class struggle, and the youth responded. They formed groups called Red Guards, which ended up acting as literal death squads. Starting with the Red August of 1966, where over 10,000 people were murdered, there was the Guangxi Massacre, the Guangdong Massacre, the Yunnan Massacres, and more; the estimated death toll of the Cultural Revolution tops out at 20 million. Aside from those who were killed, millions more were tortured, persecuted, and forcibly displaced from their homes.

## SUZUMIYA HA\*\*UR

Just like how the art on this poster is a bit off, the text also has its own problems. The name "Suzumiya Haruhi" is supposed to be written like this: 涼宮ハルヒ. However, the second kanji - the "miya" part - has been swapped out for a similar kanji: 官, usually pronounced "kan". The result isn't a real word.

What's more, the second letter in "Haruhi" has been censored. It should be "ru" (ル), but that letter's at the end now for some reason, and written backwards besides.

## "NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, JAPAN IS AWASH IN HONEY TRAPS!"

Most of Nozomu's honey trap examples are straightforward, but there are a few which could use some explanation:

- **Tricked into paying a fake bill by a text from a pretty girl:** This is a type of fraud done via mobile phones. The victim receives a text from "a beautiful woman" which includes a link to a "free" adult video website. If the victim falls for it and clicks the link, after a short amount of time, he'll receive a message claiming that he now owes a large registration fee, usually \$1000 or more. Even though the bill isn't legally binding, most victims pay right away to keep their browsing habits from being revealed.



• **DVDs you buy for the bonus material:** The bonus material is a “honey trap” when it includes extra fanservice that wasn’t in the TV version.

• **Panties made to be seen:** In 2006, there was a rising fashion trend involving bras and panties that were worn to be seen. Brightly-colored bras under shirts with low necklines and G-string undies peeking out from hip-hugging jeans were all the rage among the younger crowd.

## LUCKIE ZTAR

The real version of Lucky Star is spelled らき☆すた. But for this bootleg version, the “ki” in Lucky is backwards, and the “su” (す) in Star is actually a malformed “mu” (む).

## SQUEAKY CLEAN



At the start of Part B, the camera is moving through the school, and all the walls are sparkling. That’s because this story is based on manga chapter 109 - and if you recall, at the end of chapter 108 (“The Secret Passage to the Interior”, animated in episode 9), Chiri burnt the school down while trying to be a proper dojikko. So apparently, the school has now been completely rebuilt, and everything is entirely brand new.

## BUGUN TOTAL WAR HIGH SCHOOL

And since it’s a new school, of course it has a new name! Today, it’s the name of the military-esque private school from the baseball comedy manga Mr. Fullswing.

## 1:40 BIG LAUGHS ON-AIR BATTLE

“Big Laughs On-air Battle” is a play on a real-life comedy program from 1999 called Roaring Laughter On-air Battle. It was structured like a competition: comedians would perform their skits off-air, and judges in the audience would vote for who they liked best. Then, the five or so groups who rated the highest earned the right to actually perform their act on-air.

One of the headliners of Zetsubou-sensei's fictional "Big Laughs" show is a group called "Great Chicken". This is based on an actual comedy duo called Great Chicken Powers, consisting of Masaki Kitahara and Kei Watanabe. The two debuted in 1994, but disbanded in 2005 to pursue other entertainment careers.

**"THESE ARE ALL BITTER, FIERCE STRUGGLES!"**

Right after Nozomu says this, a conversation appears on screen:

"Make a third season!"

"I know there's no investors yet, just have them start the planning!"

"You don't have sponsors lined up yet?!"

"Find us some money ASAP!"

"We'll link it to that other show's rights, so fund this one, too!"

This is clearly SHAFT's unaired struggle to get Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei season 3 into pre-production.

**~INVISIBLE PART~**

This bold text, with katakana on top and English underneath, is a spoof on "Mienai Chikara ~Invisible One~", the nineteenth single from the legendary J-rock duo B'z. The song released in 1996, and was used as the first ending song for the anime series Hell Teacher Nu~be~.

**OTONADA MASASHI**

Beware of this particular political candidate. If you tweak his name just a little bit, you get the words "otona damashi", or "a scam targeting adults".

**KODANSHA MANGA AWARD WINNER**



This headline is running in a newspaper called the Momotsuki Daily News. Fans of SHAFT's other shows might recognize "Momotsuki" as the name of the academy in Pani Poni Dash!; this paper first shows up in episode 24 of that series. Then, the



Momotsuki Daily News appears again in episode 2 of Hidamari Sketch. And finally, here it is in Zetsubou-sensei. Talk about wide circulation!

Also, if that black-and-white picture seems familiar, it's because it's Kouji Kumeta's "funeral picture" from the fake funeral he held for himself in 2007. (See season 1's liner notes for details!)

## **WINNER DEAR BOYS**

In 2007, the Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei manga won the Shounen Category of the Kodansha Manga Awards! ...Except not completely. It was actually a tie with Hiroki Yagami's basketball manga Dear Boys: Act 2.

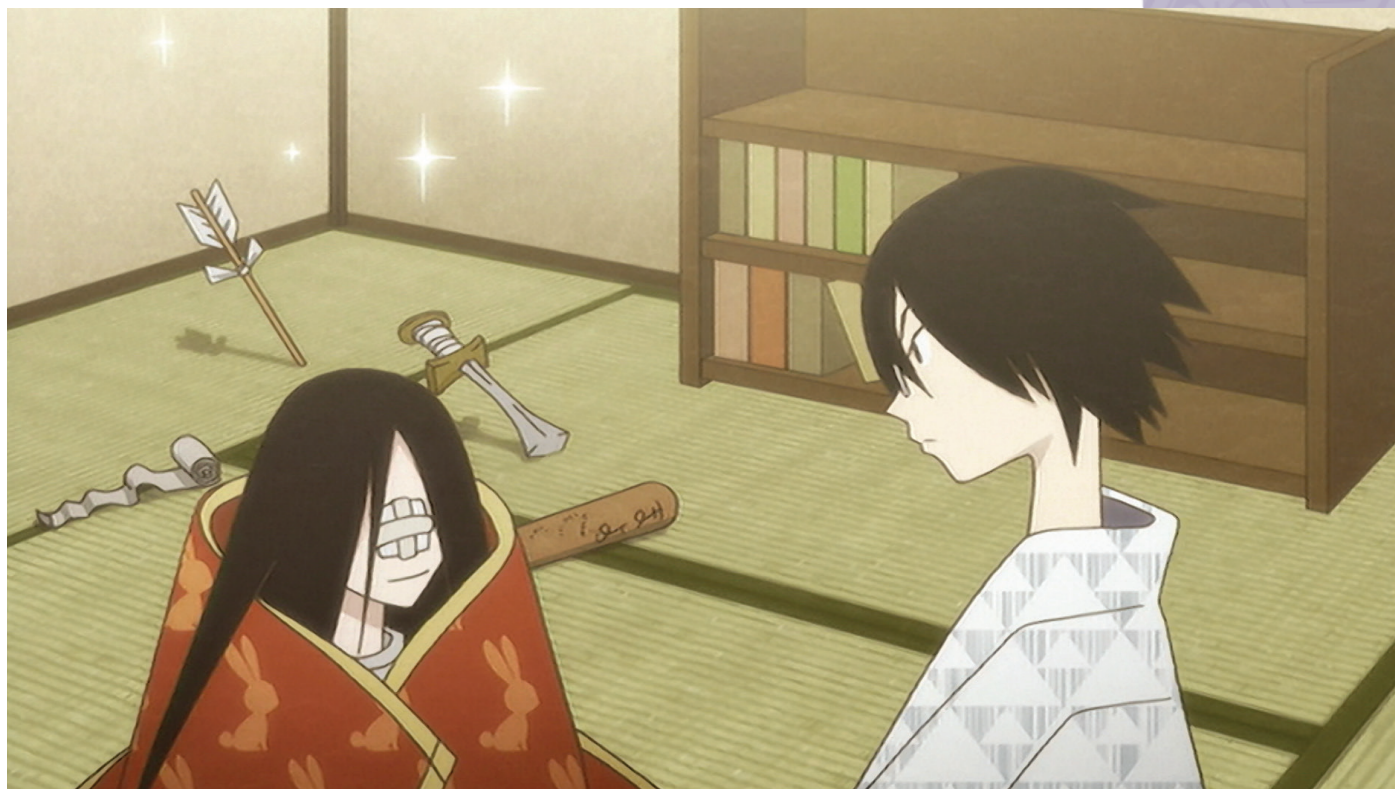
## **THIS OAD WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE KIND SUPPORT OF YOU, THE FANS**

Most anime fans are probably familiar with the acronym OVA ("Original Video Animation"), but OAD is a bit more obscure. It stands for Original Animation DVD, and refers to special anime DVDs that are bundled together with their source-material manga. That's how Goku Sayonara Zetsubou-sensei was first released: the limited edition versions of Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei manga volumes 15 and 16 both included a DVD with episodes of Goku.

## **WHICH ONE OF US WILL YOU CHOOSE?**

Nozomu's example of a "common rom-com manga" is a page from Strawberry 100%, the 2002 harem manga by Mizuki Kawashita. Aya Toujou and Tsukasa Nishino are confronting the main character, Junpei Manaka, about which one of them he likes more.

## **"WHAT... HAPPENED TO YOUR NOSE?"**



Kiri has been getting into her fair share of fights. Among the weapons of her vanquished foes, we can see Abiru's bandages and Mayo's baseball bat.

## "IN ANY CASE, THERE ARE FIERCER BATTLES BEING WAGED THAN THE ONES WE CAN SEE!"

Nozomu is ready to shed some light on a bevy of unseen battles:

- **Land rezoning:** Zoning laws are laws that dictate how land can be used. For example, a factory can't be built in a neighborhood that's been zoned as a residential area. However, things change over time, and sometimes it would be useful to swap zones - but doing so is a deceptively difficult process, involving government officials, companies, landowners, and any residents who live on or near the land.

- **Securing votes in the prime minister race:** Japan's prime minister isn't elected by the general public. Instead, both houses of the National Diet vote in two-round elections to choose who the new prime minister will be. That means, in the runup to the election, politicians are rushing around behind closed doors to secure as many votes as possible.

- **Collusion before competitive bidding opens:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, large construction projects almost always start with competitive bidding. Companies review the project and submit their "bid" - how much they will charge to do the job. Ideally, this is all done fair and square. But sometimes, the bidding companies (and even the government officials who solicited the bids) will secretly collude with each other and rig the whole process. For example, in September of 2006, executives at two different construction companies were arrested for bid rigging on a project in Fukushima. Then, in November of that same year, the governor of Wakayama was arrested for bid rigging on a 1 billion yen sewerage project.

- **Fighting to host the Olympics:** The Olympics is a prestigious international event that's meant to bring the world together. However, it's not without its seedy underbelly. Countries where the Olympic Games are held stand to make a lot of money through tourism, so there's a lot of backroom competition to win the International Olympic Committee's favor as they choose which country will be the next host. Readers might be most familiar with the 1998 Salt Lake City bribery scandal or the recent 2020 Tokyo bribery scandal, but there are plenty more examples to be had.

- **Intelligence warfare during the Six-Party Talks:** If you recall from previous liner notes, the Six-Party talks were a series of meetings between six countries - China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, the US, and North Korea - as they attempted to address security concerns over North Korean nuclear weapons after North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003. There were no reported incidents of "intelligence warfare" during the Six-Party Talks, but it's hard to imagine representatives from six countries sitting down together without some kind of cloak-and-dagger mischief happening behind closed doors. As recently as April 2023, when documents leaked indicating that the US had been spying on South Korea, Choi Jin, director of the Institute of Presidential Leadership in Seoul, replied that American wiretapping activities "are something that everyone already knows [about]. ... I think South Koreans also try to wiretap [US officials] as well. People feel animosity toward the word 'wiretapping'. But in other words, it's called 'intelligence gathering'."



• **Presentations for World Heritage Site designation:** Similar to the Olympics, locations that are labeled World Heritage Sites are likely to have a large increase in tourism. Thus, even though the idea behind World Heritage Sites is sound, the group that designates these World Heritage sites, Unesco, is susceptible to corruption. In 1999, leaked documents revealed that cronyism, nepotism, and inefficient use of funds were plaguing almost every level of the organization.

• **Charm offensives in all types of negotiations:** The claim here is that in any sort of negotiation where Party A has something Party B wants, Party B will resort to all manner of secret schmoozing in order to make sure they get what they want from Party A.

• **Negotiating with terrorists behind the scenes:** Many countries have an official policy of not negotiating with terrorists. The idea is that: 1) there's no guarantee the terrorists will honor their side of the bargain (which usually involves returning hostages); and 2) if the terrorists don't get what they want through terrorism, it will disincentivize future acts of terror. However, real-life situations are often much more complicated. In July 2007, 23 South Korean missionaries were abducted by the Taliban. Two men were executed, and the rest were moved around between cellars and farmhouses until eventually, the South Korean government agreed to remove 200 troops from Afghanistan and pay the equivalent of 20 million US dollars in order to get the civilians safely home.

• **Episode 6 of Mo\*tan:** Moetan is an anime series from 2007 about a 17-year-old girl who looked young enough to be in grade school. The show's creators tried to push the envelope on "not actually little girl" fanservice, but they ended up going too far. Episode 6 was so objectionable that TV networks refused to air it, and a recap episode was hastily aired in its place.

• **Loveless marriages:** No matter how things appear on the outside, it's impossible to know the interior of another person's heart. Relationships - especially celebrity relationships which are highly publicized - might look perfect from afar, but in reality, every relationship has its difficulties. Marriage requires love and self-sacrifice from both spouses, which is challenging, but also infinitely rewarding.

• **Microid S:** This is a manga and anime series written by Osamu Tezuka in 1973. It's the story of two boys and a girl who were shrank down to the size of insects by a hyper-intelligent, megalomaniacal ant named Guidoron. They escape and try to warn the rest of humanity about Guidoron's plans to destroy mankind, but most people don't believe them, so the children use their powers to become small and fight the bugs on their own. It's the quintessential example of "battles that no one sees".

• **Unofficial school web sites:** In the early 2000s, as internet-capable mobile phones became more popular in Japan, underground school web sites started to appear. As opposed to official school web sites, these unofficial sites were places created by students, where they would gather to discuss life at school in an on-line setting hidden from parents and teachers' eyes. Unfortunately, these underground sites also became a cesspool of vitriol and bullying. The public at large finally became aware of the problem when a 17-year-old in Takigawa was bullied to such an extreme that he took his own life. Teachers at first denied that his death was due to bullying, because as far as they could tell, nothing was happening to him at school. But they couldn't see the terrible struggle that was happening behind their backs on the Internet.

- **T\*S Boxing:** The censored name is TBS, short for Tokyo Broadcasting System. In 2006, TBS aired a boxing match between 19-year-old Japanese boxer Kouki Kameda, and Venezuelan fighter Juan Jose Landaeta. Even though Landaeta was clearly winning the fight, in the end, Kameda won by split decision based on a single judge's vote. People all over the world watched the boxing match, but no one watched the poor TBS employees who had to take over 50,000 calls from viewers complaining about the decision.

- **Cabaret girl dressing rooms:** Girls at cabaret clubs make their money based on how many clients they get. So the competition to look the best and attract the most attention is fierce.

- **Poaching each other's staff before an anime goes into production:** Almost all anime studios are incredibly understaffed for the amount of work they produce. When deadlines start looming, animators often get shuffled around depending on which project has the most pressing need.

- **Battle of edits between the P\*3 and Xbox on W\*k\*pedia:** The censored names here are "PS3" (as in Sony's PlayStation 3) and "Wikipedia". Childish bickering over "which video game console is the best" is nothing new, but the PS3/Xbox generation was the first time that Wikipedia was available as a weapon in the console wars. Nintendo's Wii entry wasn't immune, either. Users were changing the articles in ridiculous ways, like drawing a Hitler moustache and horns on a picture of Bill Gates for the Xbox page, or replacing the entire Nintendo page with nothing but the text "Nintendo sucks!!!!!!!!!!" It got so bad that in November of 2006, Wikipedia locked down all pages relating to the PS3, Xbox, and Nintendo Wii, in the hopes that the vandals would lose interest by the time the pages were reopened for public editing.

- **Internal squabbles on the Japan team during the World Cup in Germany:** Japan's 2006 World Cup team, led by Brazilian coach Zico, never really came together as well as it should have. Despite great players and some dramatic wins, overall the team played poorly. There are many theories as to why, but many fans seem to think it was behind-the-scenes arguments and stubbornness that kept the members from coming together as a team.

## GYM CARREY

...Do I have to dignify this with a liner note? Yes? Okay then - this is a groan-worthy pun referring to famous Canadian-American comedian Jim Carrey.

**"THAT'S RIGHT. UNBEKNOWNST TO ANY OF YOU, MY BROTHER IS TRAINING HIS NECK!"**

Nozomu's strength-training routine is unabashedly inspired by manga:

- **Pencil push-ups:** In the 1980 manga Todoroke! Ichiban ("Roar! Ichiban"), taking school tests was a battle... literally. The main character Ichiban had special phantom pencils called Shiryo Hi-Uni, which never ran out of lead and were sharper than knives. He even used them to do push-ups - instead of pushing up with his palms, he held a pencil in each hand and used the pointed tips of lead to lift himself off the ground.

- **Finger pull-ups:** The 2003 manga Gaku: Minna no Yama ("The Peak: Everyone's Mountain") followed the adventures of a mountain-rescue volunteer named Sanpo Shimazaki. One of Sanpo's special skills was that he could do pull-ups with just his fingers.

- **Split a stone with your index finger:** The test of strength that has appeared in countless manga throughout the ages - characters breaking something tough using only their bare hands



- is based on a real-life art called tameshiwari. Its most popular real-life application is the stereotypical karate move of splitting a board in half, though tameshiwari competitions can go far beyond that. Tameshiwari was popularized by the karate master Masutatsu Ooyama, who strengthened his bones and muscles by repeatedly striking stones and trees. (Readers who aren't familiar with Ooyama might still know him in a roundabout way: Ryu from the Street Fighter game series is an homage to Ooyama.)

- **On a boat, hit a 5-yen coin with a ball:** Hyuuma Hoshi, the main character of the famous 1966 baseball manga *Star of the Giants*, came up with a creative way to improve his already impeccable pitching. He took a small abandoned fishing boat and attached a fishing pole to it, which had a 5-yen coin dangling from the end of the fishing line. Then, he stood on a second little fishing boat, which was 90 feet away from the first boat. As both boats rocked back and forth in the water, Hyuuma threw baseballs and did his best to hit the coin. After practicing this way for a while, he was able to hit the coin every time.

- **Hit an iron ball with a bat:** Another *Star of the Giants* reference. Hyuuma Hoshi's rival, Mitsuru Hanagata, improved his already impeccable batting by hitting iron balls with an iron bat.

- **Training vest:** Yet another *Star of the Giants* reference. When Hyuuma Hoshi was ten years old, his father forced him to wear a strange vest made of leather straps and springs. The springs kept Hyuuma's arms from moving properly, so any action that required his arms - like, say, pitching - became substantially more difficult. The vest went under Hyuuma's clothes, and he wore it day and night for the next five years. However, when he took it off at age 15, he was the strongest baseball player at his school, by far.

- **Throw a ball outside through a hole in the wall:** Again, this is from *Star of the Giants*. Part of Hyuuma's pitching practice as a child was that he would throw a ball through a baseball-sized hole in the side of his house, and then the ball would hit a tree outside and bounce right back through the hole.

- **Stand on tiptoe on the bus:** One more time, this is from *Star of the Giants*. On Hyuuma's first day with the Yomiuri Giants, when he boarded the team bus, he noticed that no one was sitting. All the players rode the bus while standing on tiptoe, as a way of strengthening their legs.

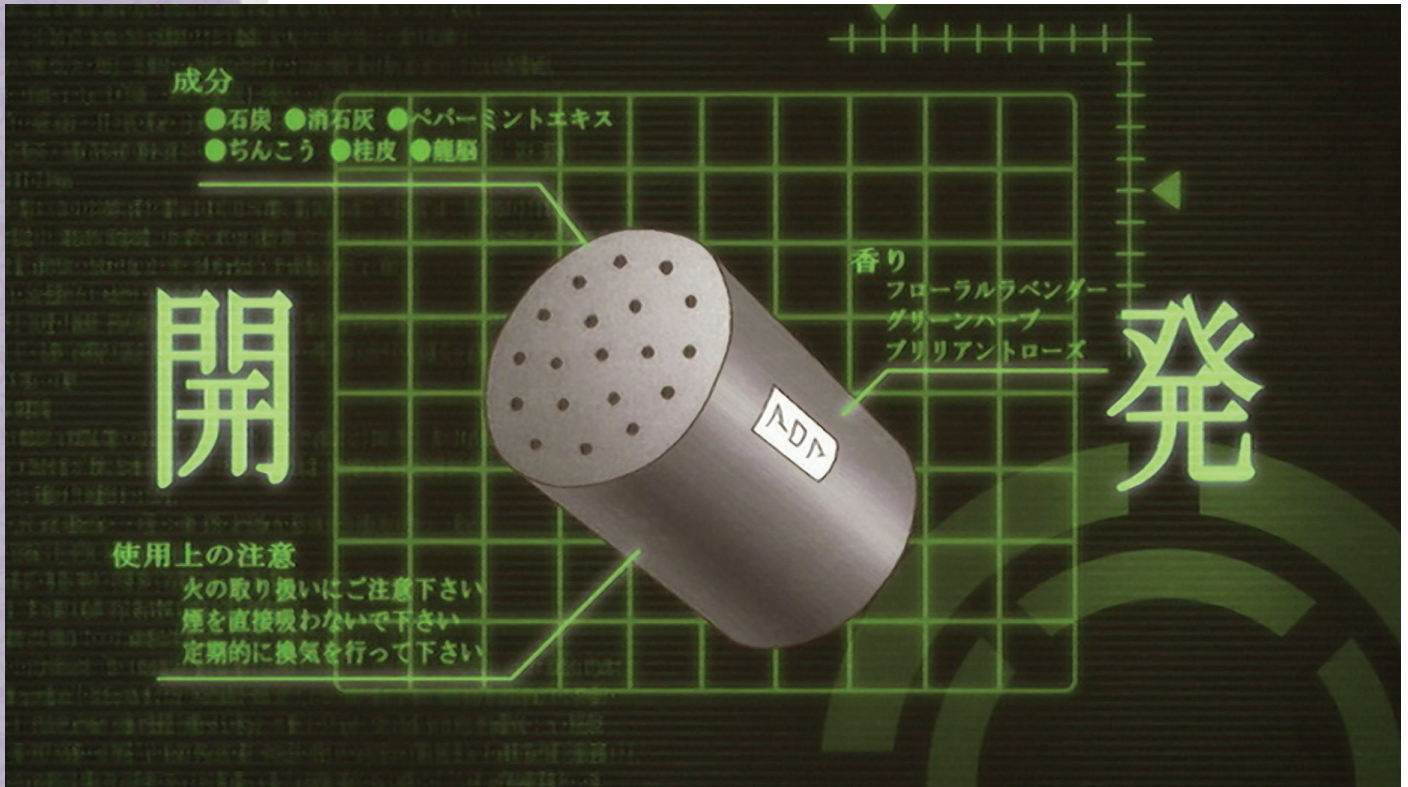
- **Being chased by a jeep:** This last exercise is from the tokusatsu series *Ultraman Leo*. Leo wasn't strong enough to beat Alien Karly, so another hero, Ultraseven, decided to give him some special training... Basically, he just drove around trying to run over Leo with his jeep until Leo figured out how to avoid his "attacks".

## THE RED X

As Rin starts to talk about the technology in Nozomu's briefcase, a giant red X appears on the screen, which looks exactly like the logo for a 2000 NHK show called *Project X: Challengers*. It was a documentary show that covered the unknown or unseen struggles that people faced in various situations, including product development. So a story about the challenges in making Nozomu's gear would fit right in.



**"THEY'VE DEVELOPED SCENTED BRIQUETTES THAT DON'T USE UP OXYGEN!"**



There's a lot of extra data on the computer screen readout. It says that the ingredients in these briquettes are: coal, slaked lime, peppermint extract, agarwood, dried citrus peel, and peony flowers. They come in three different scents: Floral Lavender, Green Herb, and Brilliant Rose. And the product use warnings are: use caution when handling fire, do not inhale the smoke directly, and make sure to have proper ventilation at all times.

**"NEW ARRANGEMENTS OF ENYA SONGS THAT MAKE YOU WANT TO LIVE!"**

This new type of Enya CD also has some product data attached. Its effects are listed as: "heightened concentration" and "antidepressant". The artist is not Enya, surprisingly, but Koume Hirose. And it comes with the bonus extras of a luxurious picture label, and an original sticker.

### **WISH LIST**

After showing off the new Enya CD, a list suddenly pops up on screen. From the contents, it appears to be a list of the new technology that the SHAFT staff would like to have. Most of them make complete sense as requests from animators, though it seems like someone snuck in a wish for an upgraded version of The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion, a 2006 RPG from Bethesda. The base game only supports eight companions, and UXGA (1600x1200) has since been supplanted by higher, widescreen resolutions.

**"...A WAR BETWEEN THE MOON ARMY AND WALKER ARMY HAS BEEN RAGING FOR 70,000 YEARS!"**

Combine the "Moon" army and the "Walker" army, and you get Moonwalker, the 1988 anthology movie starring Michael Jackson. The film's name came from his signature dance, the moonwalk.



**"THE SOLES OF THAT SINGER WHO SINGS BAREFOOT ARE COMPLETELY COVERED IN CURSES!"**



Based on the image of a woman in a dress on a dark stage, this is most likely referring to Chihiro Onitsuka, a Japanese singer-songwriter. In 2002, at her Ultimate Crash concert at the Nippon Budokan, she went out on stage barefoot.

**"YES, AND EVEN THE WHOLE COUNTRY OF JAPAN IS RULED BY A MERE THREE GOPPELDANGERS!"**

Kafuka's three "goppeldangers" are yellow, red, and blue. These are the colors in the flag for Soka Gakkai, a controversial sect of Buddhism that promotes peace, culture, and education, but also states that its ultimate goal is to gain political power and install a government based on Buddhist law. Komeito, Soka Gakkai's political arm, was once the third most powerful party in Parliament. As of this writing, it serves as the junior coalition partner of the Liberal Democratic Party.

### **A PORTRAIT OF PROHIBITION**

This episode title is a play on A Portrait of Shunkun, a short story written by Jun'ichirou Tanizaki in 1933. "Shunkun" is a name, but here it's been replaced with the word "shukkin", which means "prohibited".

### **DAIGOUIN JAKI'S HEIGHT. THE DESIGN OF GENERAL DEVIL'S MASK...**

This next sketch is all about "things that don't live up to the spirit of the original". So it makes sense that this Lupin-style text is full of examples:

- **Daigouin Jaki's height:** In the 1995 manga Sakigake! Otokojuku ("Charge! A Man's School"), the character Jaki was a third year student known as The Emperor of Otokojuku. When he first appeared in the story, he was a giant man,

over 30 feet tall. But in later appearances, it was explained that his fighting spirit just makes him look incredibly tall.

• **The design of General Devil's mask:** Many of the characters in the long-running series Kinnikuman are based on reader submissions, and General Devil is no exception. His original design, called "Viking Man", wore a three-horned helmet that had a dark, vaguely bat-shaped opening for the eyes. But after just one week, the manga's creators altered the design, claiming it "looked too weak". General Devil's new mask still has three horns, but now it also has a seam with metal rivets running down the front, and the eye holes are two simple squares.

• **There's not a single original Musume left:** It's been mentioned in previous liner notes that Morning Musume's roster changes frequently. It should come as no surprise, then, that the original group of girls who debuted with the band have long since "graduated" and moved on.

• **Set up to be the eighth Ultra sibling:** Another reference to Kinnikuman. Before the manga went into serialization, a one-shot comic was released that claimed the hero Kinnikuman was an illegitimate child of Ultraman's father. This would have made him one of the Ultra Brothers, and part of the Ultraman universe - though of course, it was all a joke. But Tsuburaya Productions, the company behind the Ultraman franchise, wasn't laughing. The Ultraman connection was quickly scrapped, never to return.

• **High-Tech Weaponized Vehicle Viper:** Viper is a 1994 American TV series about a Dodge Viper RT/10 roadster that's infused with high-tech weaponry and the ability to shapeshift in order to fight crime. Unfortunately, Viper ran into several delays during production, and was cancelled after one season due to low ratings. However, Paramount Television reworked the show for syndication, and brought it back two years later with a new cast and new (downgraded, less expensive) special effects.

• **The finale of Shurato:** Legend of Heavenly Sphere Shurato is an anime from 1989 based on Hiroshi Kawamoto's manga of the same name. It was a popular series with good-looking, high-quality animation. But after the first 26 episodes, Tatsunoko Productions, the studio behind the show, started to farm out more of the animation to overseas production houses, and the quality dropped to astonishingly low levels. By the time episode 34 aired with the big final battle between Shurato and Gai, characters were frequently off-model, and you could count every frame of movement in any given shot. It was so bad that for the next decade or so, any show with a significant drop in quality was said to have "Shura'd".

## A SHIELD OF THE ORIGINAL

This episode title is a play on A Shield of Illusion, a short story written by Natsume Souseki in 1905. The Japanese title of Souseki's story is "Gen'ei no Tate", with "gen'ei" meaning "illusion". However, here it's been swapped out with "genkei", which means "original form".



## A MOTLEY CREW



This episode is packed full of cosplay! Here are the characters standing around Nozomu as soon as he arrives. Starting from the right:

- Gigantor (from Gigantor)
- Captain Ultra (from Captain Ultra, a 1967 tokusatsu series. Not to be confused with the Captain Ultra series by Marvel Comics)
- Moonlight Mask (from Moonlight Mask)
- Q-Tarou (from Obake no Q-Tarou)
- Arashi Ishino (from Game Center Arashi)
- Astro Boy (from Astro Boy)
- Jumbo Max (a puppet from the Drifters' comedy show It's 8 o'clock! Everybody Gather 'Round)
- Tiger Mask (from Tiger Mask)
- The Red Ranger (from Himitsu Sentai Gorenger)
- Robocon (from Ganbare!! Robocon)
- Tarou Kaibutsu (from The Monster Kid)
- Anpanman (from Anpanman)
- Kinnikuman (from Kinnikuman)
- Casper (from Casper the Friendly Ghost)
- Birdman (from Perman)
- Black Devil (from We're the Funny Tribe)
- Densen Man (from Look! Eat! Laugh!)
- Joe Yabuki (from Tomorrow's Joe)
- Gonta (from Can I Do It?)
- 8 Man (from Tobor the 8th Man)
- Mr. Mystery (from Arcade Gamer Fubuki)
- Joe Shimamura (from Cyborg 009)
- Doraemon (from Doraemon)
- Kamen Rider (from Kamen Rider)
- Sally Yumeno (from Sally the Witch)
- Krillin (from Dragon Ball)
- Vegeta (from Dragon Ball)
- Sailor Moon (from Sailor Moon)
- Jigen (from Lupin the 3rd)
- Hanamichi Sakuragi (from Slam Dunk)
- Rei Ayanami (from Neon Genesis Evangelion)
- Hentai Kamen (from Hentai Kamen)
- Dejiko (from Di Gi Charat)
- Kenshin Himura (from Rurouni Kenshin)
- Yusuke Urameshi (from YuYu Hakusho)
- Ryu (from Street Fighter)
- Chun Li (from Street Fighter)
- Pegasus Seiya (from Saint Seiya)
- Lum (from Urusei Yatsura)

- Jotaro Kujo (from JoJo's Bizarre Adventure)
- Kitarou (from GeGeGe no Kitarou)
- Medama-oyaji (from GeGeGe no Kitarou)
- Nezumi Otoko (from GeGeGe no Kitarou)
- Haruhi Suzumiya (from The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya)
- Shana (from Shakugan no Shana)
- Amu Hinamori (from Shugo Chara!)
- Roy Mustang (from Fullmetal Alchemist)
- Alphonse Elric (from Fullmetal Alchemist)
- Edward Elric (from Fullmetal Alchemist)
- Corporal Giroro (from Sgt. Frog)
- Kogarashi (from Kamen no Maid Guy)
- Maka Albarn (from Soul Eater)
- The Golden Bat (a superhero created in 1930 for kamishibai, a form of street theater using paper. Golden Bat is considered to be the world's first superhero, having been created before Superman in 1938)
- Aoi Nogami (from Zettai Karen Children)
- Kyoro-chan (the mascot for a Japanese candy called Chocoball)

## "WHY IS EVERYONE DRESSED LIKE THAT?"

More cosplayers are scattered about. This time, there's:

- Sailor Moon (from Sailor Moon)
- Harumi as Lunamaria Hawke (from Mobile Suit Gundam SEED Destiny)
- Rei Ayanami (from Neon Genesis Evangelion)
- Neko Musume (from GeGeGe no Kitarou)
- Suiseiseki (from Rozen Maiden)

## "DEA/YZA OR ATH/YZA!"

In keeping with her Gundam SEED getup, Harumi is offering two different Gundam SEED-based doujinshi. The recipient has their choice of yaoi pairings: Dearka Elsman and Yzak Joule, or Athrun Zala and Yzak Joule.

## "I'M A WITCH."





Chiri isn't just a witch. She's dressed up as Kiki from the 1989 Studio Ghibli movie Kiki's Delivery Service. So really, she's putting on as much cosplay as the rest of them.

**"I'M DRESSED AS A TRADITIONAL JACK-O'-LANTERN, SO WHY AM I THE ONE WHO STICKS OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB?"**

Even more costumes! There are some repeats and recolors, but here are the familiar faces in the crowd:

- No-Face (from Spirited Away)
- Yoko Littner (from Gurren Lagann)
- Sae (from Hidamari Sketch)
- Hiro (from Hidamari Sketch)
- Andromeda Shun (from Saint Seiya)
- Asuna Kagurazaka (from Negima!: Master Negi Magi)
- Miyako (from Hidamari Sketch)
- Sailor Moon (from Sailor Moon)
- Chun Li (from Street Fighter)
- Ryu (from Street Fighter)
- Ritsuko Kübel Kettenkrad (from Kujibiki Unbalance)
- A tree spirit (from Princess Mononoke)
- Yuno (from Hidamari Sketch)
- Sanosuke (a yellow body pillow that Ryouko Shintani received as a "desperate birthday present" on episode 31 of Sayonara Zetsubou Housou. However, the body pillow cosplayer is also holding the zanbatou that belongs to Sanosuke Sagara from Rurouni Kenshin)
- Yin (from Darker than Black)
- Pegasus Seiya (from Saint Seiya)
- Kagami Hiiragi (from Lucky Star)
- MegaMan.EXE (from the Mega Man Battle Network series)
- Suzaku Kururugi (from Code Geass)
- Kitarou (from GeGeGe no Kitarou)
- Hei (from Darker than Black)
- Lum (from Urusei Yatsura)
- Casshan (from Casshan)
- Luke fon Fabre (from Tales of the Abyss)
- Tsunayoshi Sawada (from Reborn!)
- Chiaki (from Shigofumi: Letters from the Departed)
- Matoma (from Shigofumi: Letters from the Departed)
- Medama-oyaji (from GeGeGe no Kitarou)
- Tieria Erde (from Mobile Suit Gundam 00)
- Kaoru Akashi (from Zettai Karen Children)
- Fumika (from Shigofumi: Letters from the Departed)
- Kanaka (from Shigofumi: Letters from the Departed)
- Miyako Miyamura (from Ef: A Fairy Tale of the Two)
- Vegeta (from Dragon Ball)
- Goku (from Dragon Ball)
- Krillin (from Dragon Ball)
- Michael Blanc (from Macross Frontier)
- Louise Françoise Le Blanc de La Vallière (from The Familiar of Zero)
- Maka Albarn (from Soul Eater)
- Lelouch Lamperouge (from Code Geass)

## "IT COMPANIES THAT START OUT IN WEB DESIGN..."

This is specifically poking fun at the internet company Livedoor. Livedoor experienced meteoric success, and as their pool of funds grew, they started dabbling in M&As - Mergers and Acquisitions. They bought media companies, securities companies, and even used car companies. Livedoor was also one of the companies in the running to create the new baseball team which would eventually become the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles. And Livedoor's founder, Takafumi Horie, became something of a celebrity, with several TV appearances to his name... until he was arrested for securities fraud in 2006.

### SECRET MEETING

These manga executives are discussing the release of A New Contract: Star of the Giants Hanagata. It was a 2006 remake of the classic baseball manga Star of the Giants, but this time from the point of view of Hoshi's rival, Hanagata. Though the overall story was mostly the same, the setting was moved to be in the present day, and many of the details were changed.

Here are the changes that the executives are talking about:

- **"That team isn't popular these days!":** "That team" is the Yomiuri Giants. It's the team that Hoshi ends up playing for in the original Star of the Giants.
- **"True, that other team from Kansai is far more popular.":** In the original Star of the Giants, Hoshi's rival, Hanagata, ends up playing for the Hanshin Tigers. They're a team based out of Nishinomiya, which is west of Kyoto.
- **"Why not have the rival be the lead?":** As previously explained, Hanagata is Hoshi's rival.
- **"Change the title to the name of the rival team, and keep the old one in small print.":** That's almost exactly what they did.
- **"We can't have a high schooler drive to school, though.":** In the original Star of the Giants, Hanagata is the son of a wealthy automobile mogul, so he drives a convertible to school. This is impractical for a number of reasons, including the fact that you have to be 18 to get a driver's license for anything larger than a moped.

### MAKE A NOTE OF IT

During the planning meeting in the forest, there's a whiteboard in the background. At first, it says: "Meeting in progress. Looking for story ideas." But the next time we see it, there's a lot more text, and it's almost all references to Sayonara Zetsubou Housou:

• **Name change Zipper → Fastener. Oh shoot, I have to zip up my fly:** In episode 11 of Sayonara Zetsubou Housou, Hiroshi Kamiya (Nozomu's voice actor) asked the question, "If Sound Director Toshiki Kameyama came into the room with his fly open, would you let him know?" In Japanese, the word for "pants zipper" is "chakku", which is also how you would pronounce the English name "Chuck". This somehow devolved into giving the Sound Director the nickname "Chuck Kameyama", and from that point on, Hiroshi Kamiya had to keep explaining that he had never actually seen Toshiki Kameyama with his fly open.

• **"Furu" - X "Furi" - O:** Hiroshi Kamiya has had voice roles in many different anime, including 2002's Digimon Frontier, where he played Koji Minamoto. In episode 46 of Sayonara Zetsubou Housou, the topic of Lucemon (a digital monster from Frontier) came up, and more specifically, what the "F" in "Lucemon F" was supposed to mean. Kamiya proposed that it was "furuchin", a



colloquialism for “having your penis fully exposed”. Later on, at the urging of a listener, Kamiya looked the word up in the dictionary and found out that “furichin” is also a valid form of the word.

• **9-Seater Convertible → Train:** This last one is actually about A New Contract: Star of the Giants Hanagata. In the original Star of the Giants, Hanagata drove a convertible that was so big, it could seat his entire baseball team. However, in A New Contract, Hanagata is instead depicted riding the train like a normal student.

## **"MANY THINGS NO LONGER RESEMBLE THEIR ORIGINAL FORM!"**

Here are Nozomu's examples of things that have changed, and not necessarily for the better:

• **Tokyo Digital Phone:** Tokyo Digital Phone was a mobile phone service that began in 1994. In 1999 it was rebranded as J-PHONE, then in 2001 it was bought by a British mobile phone group and became Vodafone, and then in March 2006 it was sold again and became SoftBank Mobile.

• **Sky\*\*ne:** The censored name is “Skyline”, a model of luxury car from Nissan that was popular with Japanese tuners. Until 2001, that is, when the eleventh generation Skyline was released. Breaking with previous tradition, the 2001 Skyline had no straight-six engine, no turbocharger, and no GT-R version. The car was so different that its designers had originally planned for it to be released under a different name, but the CEO at the time reversed that decision.

• **Hou\*d Dog:** Mentioned in a previous liner note, Hound Dog was a popular Japanese band that originally had six members. But in 2006, lead vocalist Kohei Otomo basically fired all the other members, and turned Hound Dog into a solo group.

• **Akihabara:** In the past, Akihabara was known as the place to get all the latest electronics. Nowadays, it's known as the place to get all the latest anime goods.

• **“You Are the Heart of My World”:** This is the title of a 2005 Korean remake of the movie Crying Out Love in the Center of the World. (It's also known as My Girl and I.) The Korean movie had a similar story, but it was more comedic in tone.

• **Stre\*t Fighter: The Movie:** The American Street Fighter film from 1994 might be a beloved classic for people who like campy movies, but it has very little to do with the video game series that it's based on. Ryu and Ken are barely in the movie, Sagat is a 50-year-old arms dealer, Charlie and Blanka were combined into one character, M. Bison can't fight without an electromagnetic suit... The list goes on.

• **Sonyism:** In the 80s and early 90s, the Sony brand name was synonymous with quality. The company found huge success with products like the Walkman and the development of the CD format, and all their electronics - from TVs to cameras to radios, were considered top-of-the-line items. But starting in the 2000s, the Sony name began to lose its luster. Crucially, they were beaten to the portable mp3 player market by Apple's iPod, which replaced both Walkmans and CDs. Also, big problems kept making the news, like Sony's CD copy protection rootkit scandal in 2005, and their exploding laptop batteries in 2006. Suffice it to say that when this show aired in 2008, Sony was in a very different place than they were 20 years prior.

• **Members of The Beach Boys:** The American rock band The Beach Boys formed in 1961 with five members: Brian Wilson, Dennis Wilson, Carl Wilson, Mike Love, and Al Jardine. By the year 2008, after a long and tumultuous history full of platinum records, struggles with mental health issues and drug abuse, and recreating their sound several times over, The Beach Boys were down to four members: Brian Wilson, Mike Love, Al Jardine, and Bruce Johnston. What's more, Brian Wilson and Al Jardine were no longer touring, which effectively brought the group down to two.

• **The Chili Peppers' sound:** When the American rock group The Red Hot Chili Peppers first formed in 1982, their musical style was a wild mix of funk, rock, and hip hop. But moving into the 2000s and beyond, their songs have taken on a mellower, pop/rock vibe.

• **Toda Na\*\*\*ko's translations:** Unlike many countries which dub over foreign films with their native language, Japanese moviegoing audiences still, on the whole, prefer films in their original language with Japanese subtitles. Enter Natsuko Toda, a famous Japanese subtitler who has created the subtitle track for over 1,500 foreign films. Though she has a wide number of titles under her belt, she's not without her critics. She was famously fired by Stanley Kubrick after he learned that she had softened the obscenity in *Full Metal Jacket*. And in 2001, Peter Jackson removed her from the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy after fans sent in a deluge of complaints over her translation for *Fellowship of the Ring*, which appeared to have no knowledge of the source material.

• **Cars in the JGTC:** "JGTC" stands for the All Japan Grand Touring Car Championship, which was renamed Super GT in 2005. The racing is all done with production model cars which have been specially tuned for performance. Thus, with their custom-made carbon bodies and tweaked engines, these cars are markedly different than when they were driven off the car lot.

• **Isahaya Bay:** This is referring to a large-scale, multi-decade project that reclaimed a tidal flat in Isahaya Bay, in the Ariake Sea. It created 670 hectares of farmland and a 2,600-hectare reservoir. Even before it was completed in 2008, the public was upset over the project's expense and possible negative environmental impact. And now, to this day, the legal battle between fisherman (who want the floodgates reopened) and farmers (who want the floodgates to stay closed) still rages on.

• **The Bamyán Buddhas:** There used to be two giant Buddha statues carved into the side of a cliff in the Bamyán valley of central Afghanistan. The one to the east was 120 feet tall, and built sometime around 570 AD. The one to the west, meanwhile, was a whopping 180 feet tall, and was built slightly later, around the year 618. However, in March 2001, the Taliban government declared them to be idols and had them destroyed.

• **The Venus de Milo:** When this famous Greek statue was discovered on the island of Milos in 1820, it was missing its arms. But surely, when it was first sculpted, both arms were there!

• **Chinese communism:** Ever since the Chinese Communist Party won the Chinese Civil War in 1949, communism has been the official ideology of mainland China. The CCP's leader, Mao Zedong, was staunch-



ly against capitalism, to the point that he initiated The Cultural Revolution - a sociopolitical movement intended to “purge capitalism from Chinese society” by means of torture, persecution, and murder. Yet Deng Xioping, the man who rose to power after Mao’s death, spearheaded many policies called the Reform and Opening-up, which have led to a type of economy described as a “socialist market economy”, or perhaps more cynically, “state capitalism”.

- **Social Democratic Party:** The Social Democratic Party used to be called the Japan Socialist Party, and at one point, it was the second largest political party in Japan. However, in the late 80s, the party’s chair, Takako Doi, was caught up in an insider trading scandal, and the party lost almost half its seats - down from 137 to just 70. Then, in 1995, the party was heavily criticized for forming a coalition with its longtime rival the LDP, and implementing a bevy of core policy changes. In 1996, the party officially changed its name to the Social Democratic Party, and as of this writing, they’re down to just a single seat in each house.

- **The Tanaka faction:** Japanese political parties are officially composed of factions, and the Tanaka Faction was a powerful faction in the Liberal Democratic Party, led by Kakuei Tanaka. From the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s, Tanaka was one of the most influential politicians in Japan. Even after he was arrested in July 1976 for taking bribes from the Lockheed Corporation, his popularity only increased, since his supporters viewed the scandal as nothing more than “retaliation from American companies” due to his hard-line stance on US trade talks. By 1981, Tanaka’s faction had over 150 members - more than a third of the LDP’s entire representation in the Diet. However, in 1983, the Lockheed trial ended, and Tanaka was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison. This put a significant dent in his political future. One of his subordinates, a man named Noboru Takeshita, formed a breakaway group in 1985, and the faction continued to splinter apart from there.

- **The Futagoyama stable:** Futagoyama was a sumo stable that was founded by Wakanohana Kanji I in 1962. It increased in size and reputation up through the 1990s, when it was led by Takanohana Kenshi. At that time, the stable had an impressive 50 wrestlers, 10 of whom were in the top division. But when Kenshi passed away in 2005, there was a messy media circus surrounding his family and their squabbles. Kenshi’s son Kouji took over the stable and changed the name to Takanohana, but all the top talent had already left, and no new talent was forthcoming. In 2007, the stable reached an all-time low of just seven active wrestlers. However, the Zetsubou-sensei writers had no way of knowing that in the early 2010s, Takanohana would start making an incredible comeback. It ended up being one of the most successful sumo stables ever, winning 42 top division championships.

- **The Yamamoto Army:** In 1989, Keiichi Yamamoto became one half of a comedy duo called Gokuraku Tombo. The two found great success, to the point that Keiichi started a comedian’s organization called the “Yamamoto Army” which had over 100 members. However, it all came crashing down in 2006 when Keiichi Yamamoto was questioned by police over alleged statutory rape of a 17-year-old girl. Keiichi and the girl settled out of court, but Keiichi’s TV contracts were terminated, Gokuraku Tombo was disbanded, and the Yamamoto Army was left high and dry.

- **Nakamura Usagi:** Usagi Nakamura is a light novel author whose most famous work is Gokudo-kun Manyuki (which would later be adapted into the 1999 anime series Gokudo). However, if you saw a picture of her back then, you might not recognize her now. In 2002, she had plastic surgery done on 12 different parts of her face, and in 2003 she had breast augmentation surgery.

- **Takarajima without Miura Jun or pinups:** “Takarajima” is a magazine that launched in 1973.



It started out as a youth magazine covering subculture, then added in punk music and new wave fashion. By the 1990s, the magazine swapped in adult content like sex articles and pinups. But then, in the 2000s, Takarajima abandoned this course entirely and turned into a business-related publication focusing on product coverage. (Jun Miura, by the way, is an illustrator who often contributed to Takarajima.)

- **Volleyball arena mostly filled with idol fans:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, several big-name bands represented by Johnny's have made their debut performing at the Volleyball World Cup, including V6 (in 1995), Arashi (in 1999), NEWS (in 2003), and Hey! Say! JUMP (in 2007). The musical act wasn't supposed to be the main draw of the event, but it quickly became that way for many attendees.

- **Japanese territories effectively being controlled by someone else:** There are several examples, including the Liancourt Rocks (under dispute with Korea), the Kuril Islands (under dispute with Russia), and the Senkaku Islands (under dispute with China and Taiwan).

- **That guy's art style, my art style:** Every artist's drawing style changes with time. This becomes especially clear in the case of manga artists who have been publishing for a long time. Kouji Kumeta's art style in Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei is noticeably different from his style in Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club. As for "that guy", it's referring to Kenjiro Hata, Kouji Kumeta's old assistant who went on to draw Hayate the Combat Butler. His style has changed in its own way, as well.

- **Most peoples' dreams for their future:** Ouch!

**"THERE'S GRILLED NEWT IN ITS ORIGINAL SHAPE..."**



This is an actual thing, called sugatayaki. It's a style of grilling where the animal retains its original form. It's done with fish, shrimp, squid, and yes, even newts.



## "THE OLD TOWN HALL THAT APPEARS WHEN THAT ONE LAKE IS DRAINED..."

She's referring to Lake Sameura in Kochi Prefecture. It's an artificial lake created by the Sameura Dam, which was built in 1963 to control flooding on the Yoshino River. Though the dam brought many benefits to the region, it also meant that parts of a village called Okawa would be submerged under the resulting reservoir. The people of Okawa fought the dam's construction, even going so far as building a new village hall as a sign of defiance against the project. But in the end, the dam was built and the town was flooded. Even now, during times when the water level is low, you can see the roof of the hall.

## JAPANESE IMPERIAL ARMY SOLDIER FOUND IN JUNGLE

This is based on a true story. Shouichi Yokoi, a sergeant with the Japanese Army, was stationed in Guam in 1943. When Americans captured the island in 1944, he went into hiding along with ten other soldiers, but as the years went by, eventually Yokoi was the only one left. He lived in a cave alone for eight years, until he was discovered in January 1972 by two local shrimp fishermen who were checking their traps. Yokoi attacked them, thinking his life was in danger - but to his surprise, they subdued him, and then gave him some soup to eat. When he was brought back to Japan in March of 1972, he famously said, "It is with much embarrassment that I return."

## THE FINE PRINT



We're shown a front page newspaper story about the lost soldier returning home... but the text of the article is actually Emperor Hirohito's speech of surrender, which was broadcast to the masses on August 15th 1945 as World War II was coming to a close.

## BENEATH THE CORPORATE COG

The next episode preview this time is a parody of *Beneath the Wheel*, a 1906 novel by the German-Swiss author Hermann Hesse. In Japanese, "wheel" is "sharin", but here it's been swapped out with "shain", which means "company worker".

*Beneath the Wheel* is the story of a man named Hans, who never quite learns how to fit in and interact with the people of his village. Here in *Zetsubou-sensei*, the story has morphed into never quite learning how to be a big company employee.

# EPISODE 2

## I AM A CAPTAIN GUNDAM -HIROSHI

The “Hiroshi” writing this message is Hiroshi Kamiya, Nozomu’s voice actor. He’s been in many, many different shows, but the important ones to know about here are Mobile Suit Gundam 00 and SD Gundam Force.

In Mobile Suit Gundam 00, the main character’s signature line is “I am a Gundam.” And in SD Gundam Force, Kamiya played a character called Captain Gundam. Put those two things together, and you get “I am a Captain Gundam.”

## LEAVE THE CHARACTER WITH GLASSES TO ME

This is also a message from Hiroshi Kamiya. Right around the time Zetsubou-sensei aired, he was coincidentally playing several different popular characters with glasses, such as Tieria Erde from Mobile Suit Gundam 00, Michael Blanc from Macross Frontier, Tsurugi Inugami from Pani Poni Dash!, and of course, Nozomu Itoshiki from Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. In fact, in a special Romance Issue of Newtype released in early 2009, Hiroshi Kamiya’s picture was posted with the title “Number 1 Voice Actor for Characters with Glasses.”

## IT IS SAID THAT A HAPPY PROCESS IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

This episode title is a twist on a line from Osamu Dazai’s 1948 novel, The Happiness of the Home. The original line is, “It is said that a happy home is the root of all evil.” But, just like Nozomu will do throughout this whole skit, the word “home” (家庭, pronounced “katei”) has been swapped out with the word “process” (過程, also pronounced “katei”).

## HIDAMARI HOT SPRING



This bathhouse tower has appeared before, in episode 5. It’s a reference to Hidamari Sketch, another anime produced by SHAFT.



## **FUKUSHI RESIDENCE**

From the kanji, this is most likely meant to be Fukushima Ochiai, eldest son of Hiromitsu Ochiai. Hiromitsu was an incredibly famous baseball player, and after his retirement, went on to become manager of the Chunichi Dragons. Fukushima, meanwhile, had only recently graduated from high school at the time Zetsubou-sensei was on the air. But he was already a big fan of Gundam, and in 2015, he would make his voice acting debut in a show called Seiyuu's Life. Since then, he's had roles in shows like Grimgar of Fantasy and Ash, Beastars, One Piece, Boruto, and many more.

## **WE MUST START WITH CAKE**

In late 2008, shortly after Tarou Asou had been appointed Prime Minister, he unveiled a new poster for the Liberal Democratic Party. It had a picture of him at the bottom making a quizzical face, and in bold letters at the top was the phrase, "We must start with the economy."

The joke here is that the Japanese word for "economy" is "keiki", which shares a pronunciation with the English word "cake".

## **DON'T LOOK AWAY**

After Nozomu finishes his "Process Visit", and right before the scene switches back to the school, there is a picture of a bloody shovel that appears for exactly one frame. Remember this... it'll be important later.

## **HAMATSU GAKUIN HIGH SCHOOL**

Today, the school is named after Randou Getto's school from Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club. But it's not just the school that's changed...

## **WHAT'S WITH THAT FACE?**



Everyone is now drawn in the style of Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club, which was Kouji Kumeta's first serialized manga. It started in 1991, whereas Zetsubou-sensei began in 2005. An artist's style can change a lot over 14 years - and we can definitely see the difference here!

## ***I HAVE OFFICIALLY GONE THROUGH THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A TEACHER. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, FATHER?***

In 2008, the board of education in Oita Prefecture was rocked by a recruitment scandal. Five education officials were arrested and 21 teachers were fired over bribes connected with the teacher hiring tests. In some cases, it wasn't even the applicants themselves doing the bribery, but rather it was their parents. One such case was Tetsuro Yano, a former senior member of the board of education who paid over a million yen to make sure that his daughter passed the test. When the scandal came to light, she ended up resigning. "While I was not aware of the illegitimate manipulation, I must in part take responsibility for it," she said. "I hope the current turmoil will subside and public trust in teachers will be maintained."

## ***FATHER: "... NOZOMU: "WHAT DID YOU SAY?!"***

Uh oh... Looks like Nozomu's suddenly very involved with the teacher recruitment scandal! We have yet to meet Nozomu's father in the anime; his name is Hiroshi, and he's a member of the National Diet. As such, he would have plenty of money and influence at his disposal if he wanted to bribe someone to make Nozomu a teacher.

## ***"ON COSTUME GRAND PRIX, IT'S NOT THE END RESULT THAT MATTERS..."***

Nozomu is referring to a show called Kinchan and Katori Shingo's All Japan Costume Grand Prix, which is a semi-annual variety show hosted by comedian Kinichi Hagimoto and actor/singer Shingo Katori. People come from all over the country to show off their costume skills, often accompanied with wild skits. One particular skit, "Matrix Ping Pong", became internationally famous after a clip of it spread across the internet.

## ***WE WILL NOT LOSE THE FIGHT HAPPENS HERE***

This is a slogan that TV Asahi used during broadcasts of the Japan National Team's soccer games. They first used it in 2004, and it was popular for years after that.

## ***"ER, THAT'S MORE ABOUT THE TASTES OF A SMALL DEMOGRAPHIC!"***

As Nozomu says this, there's a huge block of text on the chalkboard, along with a piece of paper on the wall to the left that says "Reason".

The text is from a bill to partially revise Japan's 1999 law about child pornography, officially titled the "Punishment of Activities Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children Act". Specifically, the text is the reason given for the amendment (thus the word "reason" on the paper to the left). It reads as follows:

*Taking into account the real-world actions resulting from child pornography and international trends in protection of children's rights, we have clarified the definition of child pornography, generally prohibited the possession of child pornography without good reason, and established penalties to punish those who possess child pornography for sexual satisfaction purposes. In addition, we must also enact policies which protect children who have been harmed both in mind and body, as well as establish laws to prevent Internet businesses from possessing and selling child pornography.*



## JANUARY 4TH MARIA-HOLIC

Technically, the poster on the wall says “Maria addiction” (“Maria chuudoku”). It’s a tongue-in-cheek way of referencing Maria-holic, the 2006 manga by Minari Endou. SHAFT was in charge of Maria-holic’s anime adaptation, which began airing on January 4th, 2009.

## YOU CAN DO IT, JAPAN

Normally, the phrase “you can do it” would be written “ganbare” (ガンバレ). But here, it’s written “gangare” (ガンガレ), which is a slangy version of the phrase that started on 2-chan.

## DEVOTING MYSELF TO BUDDHISM

In Japanese, this is an idiom which means “to dedicate one’s life to a worthy cause.” The phrase gained some popularity in November 1994, when the sumo wrestler Takanohana Kouji said it as he was promoted to the rank of yokozuna.

## WHAT'S JUN READING NOW?



Jun is reading *The Dancing Girl of Izu*, a 1926 novel by Yasunari Kawabata. Specifically, he’s reading the Shueisha Bunko version of the novel, which had a cover drawn by Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure artist Hirohiko Araki.

## SIBERIAN EXPRESS REACHED ITS FINAL STOP

The *Siberian Express* films were a set of campy B-movies that were lovingly created by a man named Haruo Mizuno. Mizuno did the writing, the directing, the screenplay, and even played the main character. But in 2008 he died of liver failure, and with that, the series ended.

MAKO'S MARACAS LESSONS STILL, IT'S MARACAS!

“Mako” here is Mako Sakurai, the former leader of a rock group called Bon-Bon Blanco. (Anime fans might know Bon-Bon Blanco from their song “Bon Voyage”, which was used as the fourth opening for One Piece.) Mako played the maracas for the group - a unique rock instrument, to be sure.

Bon-Bon Blanco went on hiatus in 2009, and Mako has since moved on to voice acting. In fact, her debut role was in *Kamichu!* as Yurie Hitotsubashi, who plays the maracas in the show's ending credits.

# PIZZA REFUND

On October 2nd, 2008, there was another “made-in-China” food poisoning incident in Japan. The industrial chemical melamine, which can cause kidney damage if ingested, was found in a batch of imported pizza dough. The dough had gone to an Italian food chain named Saizeriya, and Saizeriya immediately offered refunds for all customers who purchased their pizzas between September 25th and October 2nd, whether they had a receipt or not. Fortunately, no injuries were reported from the tainted dough.

"BE IT GOOD OR BAD, WE JAPANESE ARE A PEOPLE WHO WORRY ABOUT PROCESS!"



All that text swirling around in the background is another one of Nozomu's big lists! They're all examples of focusing on process more than the end result:

- **Auditions that emphasize the selection process:** When Morning Musume opens auditions for new members, it's a big deal. Thousands of girls apply, and after they go through several rounds of screening, the winners are usually announced to fans in a big live event.
- **TV shows that run endless “making of” videos before the show has aired:** This is a common advertising tactic that TV stations use for their big-budget shows.



• **Golf lovers who care about the trajectory more than the score:** Golf is a sport that requires both power and finesse to get the ball into the hole in as few strokes as possible. However, there are some who have put all their focus into a particular part of the process: driving. In a driving contest, there's no need for precise aiming, putting, or restraint. The point is just to hit the ball as far as you possibly can. Drive contests have been gaining in popularity, to the point that there are now Long Drive World Championships held every year.

• **A public works project devoted to building roadside stations along the highway:** Rest areas are an important part of any road trip, but Japan has gone the extra mile, so to speak. In 1993, the government began to build highway stations called "michi no eki" ("roadside stations") in order to promote local tourism and trade. As of this writing, there are well over 1,000 of them across Japan, each one built with its own distinct architecture. Along with the usual rest stop amenities, each station also features unique stores selling souvenirs, snacks, and local produce.

• **Buying dairy products based on the farmer's picture:** Many dairy companies in Japan, especially companies that sell organic products, will include an actual picture of the farm or the farmers on their packaging. With all the food contamination scares in Japan, the picture is meant to reassure customers that the product they're buying is safe.

• **Readers who enjoyed the process of Section Chief → Division Chief → Director → Executive Director:** This is a reference to Shima Kousaku, a famous manga series by Kenshi Hirokane. It follows the life of a fictional salaryman named Kousaku Shima as he climbs the corporate ladder at Hatsushiba Electric. When the manga first started back in 1983, it was called Kachou Shima Kousaku ("Section Chief Kousaku Shima"), and then, as Kousaku earned his promotions in the manga, the name of the manga itself changed. For example, in 1992, the manga's name was changed to Buchou Shima Kousaku ("Division Chief Kousaku Shima"), then in 2002 it was Torishimariyaku Shima Kousaku ("Assistant Director Kousaku Shima"), and so on. As of this writing, the manga is still going, and its current name is Shagai Torishimariyaku Shima Kousaku ("Outside Director Kousaku Shima").

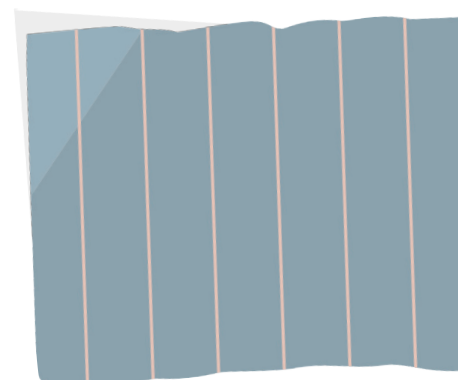
• **Teams who are satisfied with just getting to the goal, so they don't bother to shoot:** This is most likely a dig at the Japan National Soccer Team. At the time this episode was made, they were fresh off a crushing loss in the 2006 World Cup, and the failure to defend their title in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

• **Hair replacement methods that are less concerned with how much hair is restored, and more focused on how discrete the hair restoration is:** Some Japanese hair restoration companies, like Propia and Aderans, advertise that their restoration methods will look like natural hair thickening. In other words, people will gradually notice you have more hair, instead of more hair showing up all at once and catching people's attention in an unwanted way.

• **Happy families who spend most of their Golden Week vacation idling in traffic jams:** Golden Week is a rare week-long national holiday in Japan. Since most people have the week off, many people use the time to travel. But when basically the whole country is traveling at once, that leads to traffic jams. Not just in cars, either - trains are clogged with passengers, and even the walking paths in tourist cities get so crammed that it becomes difficult to get around.

• **Broadcasting baseball games, but not all the way to the end:** Because baseball isn't quite as popular in Japan as it used to be, local stations would often stop broadcasting a game when it was scheduled to end - regardless of whether or not the game was still going. Essentially, the message was, "We aired the game like we said we would. How it ends isn't important." Luckily for baseball fans, games can almost always be seen in their entirety on cable TV and the Internet.

• **Loving a manga that doesn't have an ending, but has still sold over 100 million copies:** Slam Dunk was an incredibly popular basketball manga that ran from 1990 to 1996. Even with its relatively short run, as of this writing, it's the seventh highest-selling manga of all time, with over 170 million copies sold. Yet, Slam Dunk never really got a proper ending. The manga's author, Takehiko Inoue, reportedly wanted to finish the series on a high note - so after a thrilling series of chapters where the main team plays a big tournament game, and everyone is looking forward to what will happen next, the manga abruptly ends.



• **Liking the pit stop in Hawaii more than the final destination in mainland America:** In general, Hawaii is very popular with Japanese tourists. It's a "halfway point" between Japan and America both in distance and language, since Japanese is prominently spoken there.

• **Image Clubs where they don't do the deed:** An "Image Club" is a type of brothel where the prostitutes dress up in costume according to the whims of the customer. However, Image Clubs don't normally allow penetrative sex, and limit contact to mouths or hands.

• **Boys who loved the Zeo\*g, which could perform at almost 100% power even though it didn't have legs:** The censored name is "Zeong", which is a prototype mobile suit from the original Mobile Suit Gundam. In the story, when the Zeong was deployed during the final battle at A Baoa Qu, it was only 80% complete, and still missing its legs. However, the engineers had installed two rocket thrusters where the legs would have been, and that allowed the Zeong to fight against the Federation's strongest mobile suit, the RX-78-2 Gundam.

## **WE MEAN YOU, YOU FOLKS WHO FIND THE 17-YEAR PROCESS OF GETTING AN ANIME ADAPTATION MORE INTERESTING THAN THE ANIME ITSELF**

Kouji Kumeta made his debut as a manga artist in 1990, and the Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei anime premiered in 2007. So if you're one of the people who looked up details about Kouji Kumeta's life and career during that 17-year timespan, consider yourself called out.

## **NEW GAMON RAMEN**

As mentioned in a previous liner note, Gamon Kaai was a Japanese actor who opened his own chain of ramen shops called "Ramen Gamon" in 2005. But in 2007 he had to shut them down - his talent agency held exclusive rights to the use of his name and likeness, and they sued him over using his own name and face to sell ramen. With "New Gamon Ramen", it would seem that Gamon Kaai is giving the restaurant biz another shot. Well, in Nozomu's world, anyway.



## TODAY'S SPECIAL

When Nami goes to the ramen shop, the menu items on the wall behind her are all names of people in Tarou Asou's cabinet, which was inaugurated on September 24th, 2008. From left to right, it's:

- Prime Minister Tarou Asou
- Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Kunio Hatoyama
- Minister of Justice Eisuke Mori
- Minister of Foreign Affairs Hirofumi Nakasone
- Minister of Finance Shoichi Nakagawa
- Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ryu Shionoya
- Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare Yoichi Masuzoe
- Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Shigeru Ishiba
- Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Toshihiro Nikai
- Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Kazuyoshi Kaneko (the original Minister of Land was Nariaki Nakayama, but he resigned after five days in office. Kazuyoshi was his replacement.)

## CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT



Also on the wall of the ramen shop, there's a poster featuring Mizuki Hayama from Ef: A Tale of Memories.

## TODAY'S SPECIAL, PART 2

Eventually, the shot pans to another part of the wall, where there are three more politicians' names on display: Koizumi, Abe, and Fukuda. These are Jun'ichiro Koizumi, Shinzo Abe, and Yasuo Fukuda. When this show was made in 2008, those were the three most recent prime ministers in Japan.

## **TODAY'S SPECIAL, PART 3**

In yet another shot, we see four more names on the wall: Ume, Kumeta, Shinbo, and Ken. Rather than politicians, these are all people who are close to the Zetsubou-sensei anime in one way or another.

“Ume” is Ume Aoki, the creator of Hidamari Sketch. He drew the ending art card for episode 12 of Zoku Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. (Plus, SHAFT had just recently finished work the second Hidamari Sketch anime series, Hidamari Sketch x 365.)

“Kumeta” is the creator of Zetsubou-sensei, Kouji Kumeta.

“Shinbo” is Akiyuki Shinbo, the director of the Zetsubou-sensei anime.

And “Ken” is most likely Kenjiro Hata, Kouji Kumeta’s former assistant. Hata went on to find success with Hayate the Combat Butler, and Kumeta often (jokingly) compares Hata’s popularity with his own.

## **PS LITE SOLD OUT**

“PS Lite” is a mashup between Sony’s PlayStation consoles (usually abbreviated “PS”), and the DS Lite, a streamlined version of the Nintendo DS handheld which released in 2006.

## **MOKKEDE! SAILOR FUKU BACK IN STOCK**

Another mashup, this time between the opening song for Lucky Star (“Motteke! Sailor Fuku”) and Mokke, a manga about two sisters who interact with spirits. The girl on the poster, with long black hair and a blue-and-white school uniform, is Shizuru, the older sister in Mokke.

## **WHAT'S HARUMI READING NOW?**

Harumi is reading a copy of “Shounen Magazine” which has a picture of Asuna Kagurazaka from Negima! on its cover. That makes sense, since Negima! Magister Negi Magi really did run in Kodansha’s Weekly Shounen Magazine.

## **HINO SHRINE HIKAWA SHRINE**

In the Sailor Moon series, Sailor Mars lives and works at a place called the Hikawa Shrine. However, since Sailor Mars’ real name is Rei Hino, it’s a common fan mistake to call the place Hino Shrine instead.

## **TRENDS ARE CHANGING EVERY DAY**

This is a line from Namco’s iDOLM@STER series. There’s a fictional talent agency in the games called 765 Production, and the company’s president, Jun’ichirou Takagi, advises the player to keep track of trends, with the intention of using those trends to make your idols as popular as possible.

## **GRASS TYPE FIRE TYPE WATER TYPE**

At the beginning of every Pokémon game, the player is given a choice between three starter Pokémon. One is always a grass type, one is always a fire type, and one is always a water type. These starter Pokémon are often difficult to find out in the wild, so by picking one, you are essentially forfeiting the other two for a while. Choose wisely!



## OH... THE NEW \*\*ERIA BOOK...

The censored name here is “Tieria”, as in Tieria Erde from Mobile Suit Gundam 00. Apparently Harumi was waiting for a new Gundam doujinshi to come out, but it slipped her mind.

**"THE INCONSISTENT ART STYLE IS BECAUSE OUR TALE  
DEPICTS THE GROWTH OF ONE MANGA ARTIST."**



As the narrator says this, we're shown a picture of a manga artist with an odd black hat on his head.

That artist is Kouji Kumeta, of course, but more specifically, it's his self-insert character that he used in the early days of Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club and Katte ni Kaizou. The character wears a traditional Japanese hat called an eboshi, which is a tall black hat made of black lacquered silk - though usually eboshi stand up straight, whereas Kumeta's hat is bent over in a way that suggests male genitalia. Thus his hat came to be called the “Dirty Joke Hat”.

## "SINCE SHOT 33!"

Do you remember the earlier liner note, about the single frame with a picture of a bloody shovel? That was shot 33. Everything after that - all the scenes drawn in Kouji Kumeta's old art style - was Nozomu hallucinating after being struck in the head.

## WANTED: ITOSHIKI KAREN

This picture is a mix of two different characters. The first is Kaoru Akashi from the 2005 anime Zettai Karen Children. The person in the picture has Kaoru's red hair, blue dress, and giant bow.

However, the person's actual face is the face of “Chill Itoshiki”. In the Zetsubou-sensei manga, Chill is a 34-year-old Brazilian man who is falsely accused of molestation. He's not part of Nozomu's family, but

the students assume he is because their surnames are the same.

So is this Chill in disguise? Guess it's up to the police to find out!

## **"HERE'S HIS GROWTH PROCESS!"**

Kafuka shows us three different pictures of Nozomu, all marked "Episode 1". The first picture is Kouji Kumeta's art style at the start of Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club. The second picture is Kouji Kumeta's art style at the beginning of Katte ni Kaizou. And the last is Kouji Kumeta's art style when Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei first began.

## **ANNOTATED SCHEDULE**

All throughout this segment, you'll see flashes of different production jargon like "Finish Rough Sketch" or "Advance Session with Photography".

In the original manga version of this story, Kouji Kumeta left little production notes in the margins and between boxes. He would write a date, and then some kind of record like "Sketch Up" or "Manuscript Up". Essentially, it was like a little diary of how the chapter was made.

So here, the animation staff have done much the same thing. They've included dates and notes about the process of creating this episode.

## **I AM DIFFERENT FROM YOU**

The man on this poster is former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda. In September 2008, after only a year in office, Fukuda held an emergency press conference and announced his sudden resignation. Then, at the end of the press conference, a reporter with the Chuugoku Shimbun commented that Fukuda sounded detached, as though the problems facing Japan weren't any of his business. Fukuda didn't hold back with his response: "You say I sound detached, but I'm able to see myself objectively. I am different from you." This out-of-character response caught the Internet's attention, and ended up becoming one of Japan's most popular phrases of 2008.

## **TASTY RICE MIKASA**

Under World Trade Organization accord, Japan is required to import a certain amount of rice annually. But some of that rice ends up being inedible, whether due to mold or water damage or pesticide. So it's marked for industrial use only, and ends up in products like glue.

However, in 2008, the wholesaler Mikasa Foods admitted to selling around 350 tons of industrial-use rice to companies that would be using it for food and drinks. By the time Mikasa Foods was ordered to recall the rice, it was too late - the rice had already been made into everything from shochu to school meals for preschoolers. Specifically with the preschool meals, the rice the children had eaten was found to contain twice the permissible level of pesticides.

## **HEALTHY MILK W/MELAMINE**

This is yet another food scandal. In 2008, the Chinese dairy company Sanlu added melamine to their milk and infant formula. This gave it the appearance of having higher protein, and allowed it to pass quality control testing. But, as you might remember from a previous liner note, melamine causes kidney damage in humans. Over 50,000 children were hospitalized due to drinking Sanlu milk, and six babies died.



## BULLETIN FROM THE PROPHECY MINISTRY

This episode title is a play on Bulletin from the Forecast Ministry, a story by Japanese novelist Unno Juuza.

### FAMOUS FOOD



Right after the title card, as the camera is panning up from the ground, there's a bowl of instant ramen on the floor labeled "Asia #1". This is a poke at Hiroshi Kamiya, Nozomu's voice actor. When he attended a voice actor event in Korea in 2008, he was given the nickname "Asia's #1 Voice Actor", and that quickly caught on among his fans and fellow voice-acting colleagues.

### 9.13.10:06 GET PLATINUM

September 13, 2008 was the Japanese release date for the Nintendo DS game Pokémon Platinum. If they got it at 10:06, that means they were right there at the game store when it opened.

### YOU DESERVE TEN THOUSAND DEATHS

This is a line that Tieria Erde says in Mobile Suit Gundam 00. As mentioned previously, Tieria was also voiced by Hiroshi Kamiya.

### IF YOU WANT TO SELL CARS, THEN BUY CONTAMINATED RICE!

Before the World Trade Organization was established, Japan actually had a ban on importing foreign rice. But after the trade negotiations at the Uruguay Round in 1993, as part of Japan's requirement for joining the agreements, they were obligated to open up their rice market for imports.

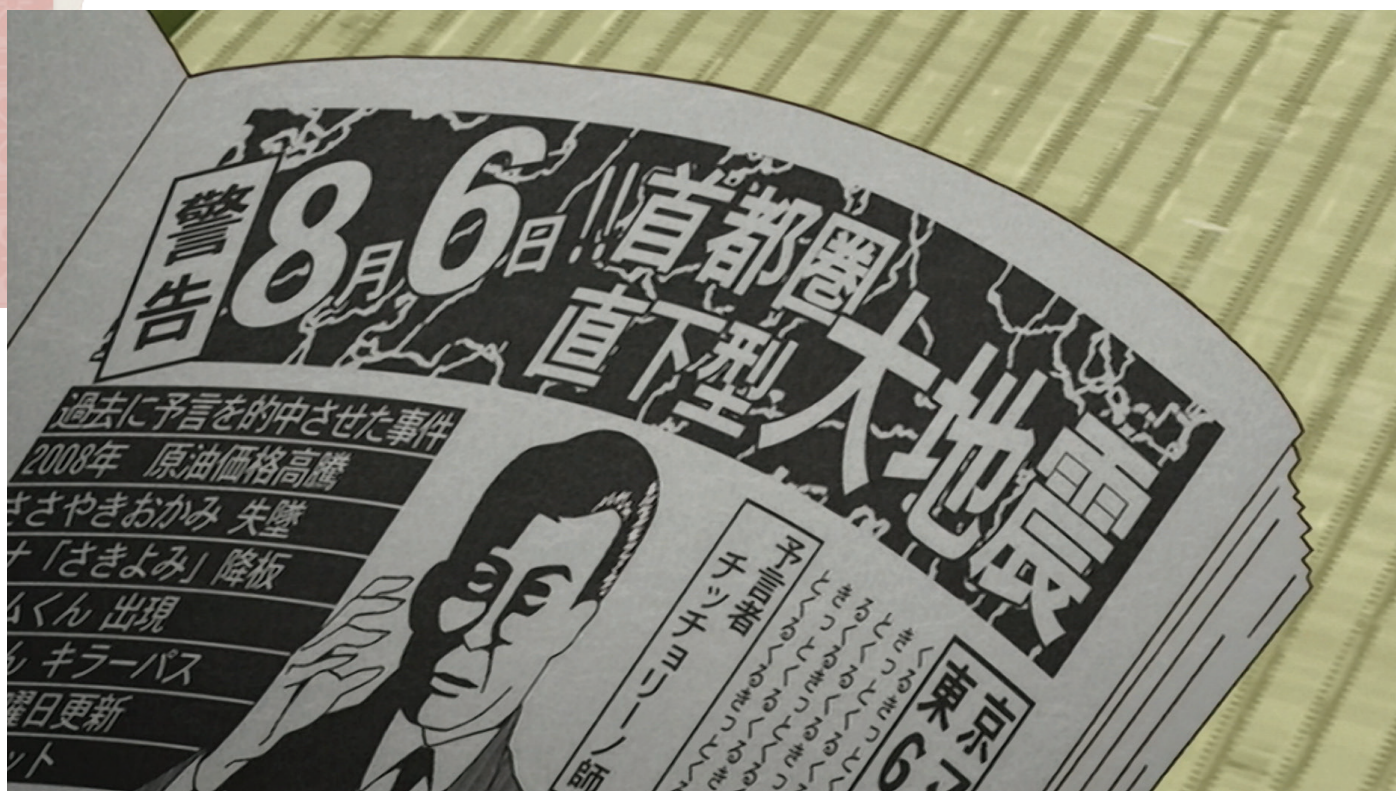
This wasn't entirely a bad thing. When rice imports were banned, there was no international competition, so Japanese consumers paid a premium for their rice. Not only that, but they also paid a hefty amount of tax money that went into rice subsidies. Opening the market eased both of these things.

However, there was also a social component to rice farming. It was a point of Japanese pride that they grew all their own rice. Opening the market also meant there wouldn't be a need to grow as much rice, which meant reducing the amount of rice paddies, thus potentially putting farmers out of work and altering the fields which were home to various species of wildlife. All for a surplus of rice that the public at large hadn't asked for.

In the end, for some, it really did seem like an ultimatum: "if you want to keep exporting cars, you have to start importing rice."

(As for the "contaminated" part, see the "Tasty Rice Mikasa" liner note above.)

## **WARNING!! ON AUGUST 6TH A MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE WILL STRIKE THE GREATER TOKYO AREA**



Underneath this headline, there's a picture of Jucelino Nobrega da Luz, who is a Brazilian teacher and allegedly, a psychic. On September 14th, 2007, he predicted that a magnitude 9.1 earthquake would hit Tokyo the following day, September 15th. It didn't happen.

## **RICE SELLING LIKE CRAZY!!**

This episode was made in 2008, when there was a global food price crisis. Due to rising oil costs, several countries had started placing export bans on staple crops like corn, wheat, and rice. The idea was that if they lowered the cost of these foods in their own countries (by keeping it all and thus raising their own supply), that would help offset the cost of living for their own citizens.

What ended up happening, though, is that once some countries stopped exporting staple foods, the price of those staple foods internationally started to rise. This led to more countries suddenly



panic buying and stockpiling food, and the price went up even further. This was devastating for developing countries whose citizens could no longer afford the price of food. It sparked protests, riots, and violence around the world.

In Japan, the effect of this crisis was that wheat and corn prices were skyrocketing, but the price of rice was relatively stable, thanks to the fact that Japan already grew enough rice to support their own needs. So the sales of rice were incredibly strong there in 2008, since it was the most affordable staple food.

## **RICE THE LIGHT AND THE DARK**

There are two possible meanings here. One is that this is referencing Japan's rice situation, which has been covered in the past few liner notes. The light: Japan creates its own supply of rice. The dark: forced imports of inedible rice ended up being harmful to the consumer, thanks in no small part to Mikasa Foods.

The other possible meaning concerns America. Though the word "America" in Japanese is usually just spoken using the English pronunciation, "amerika" (アメリカ), the actual Japanese word for America is "beikoku" (米国). If you read the kanji literally, it means "rice country". And if that's the meaning of this note, then the light side is: America is a powerful country, especially financially. And the dark side is: at the time this episode was made, the world was going through a financial crisis that was set off by the collapse of the United States housing bubble. The consequences of predatory lending and excessive risk-taking finally caught up to financial institutions, leading to an international banking crisis that affected the world's economy for years.

## **SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

This is another nod to rice, and the amount of it that Japan grows. Even though Japan has low food self-sufficiency overall, when it comes to rice, the self-sufficiency rate is almost 100%.

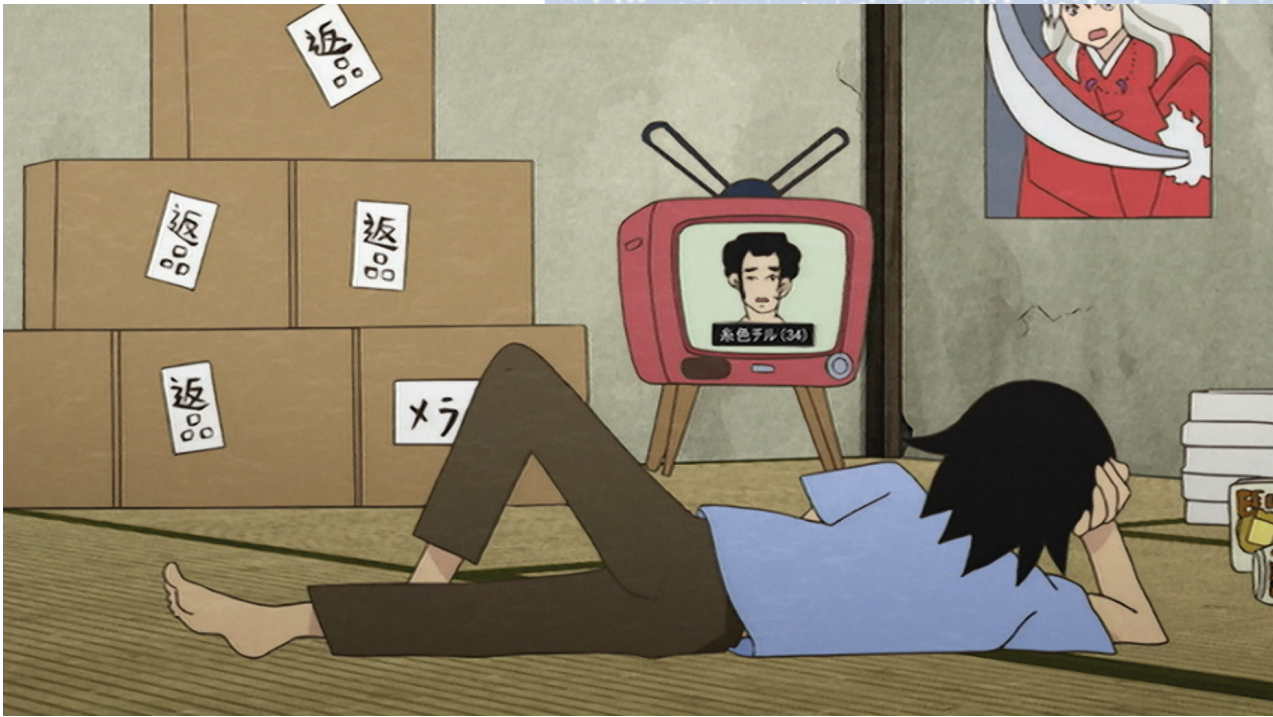
## **IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL CITIZENS TO PAY TAXES TO SUPPORT NEETS**

In real life, appeals for support like this are made for rice farmers. Though a campaign speech urging citizens to fund NEETs would certainly be interesting to watch.

## **NOW HIRING CIVIL SERVANTS NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! BENEFITS INCLUDE PAYING OUT SUBSIDIES**

Again, more rice! Rice production in Japan used to be heavily subsidized, paying hundreds of thousands of yen per hectare. However, in 2019 (long after this episode was made), the subsidy for staple rice was reduced down to zero. Time changes all things, however, and the subsidies could certainly return again if the circumstances call for it.

**"DO YOUR JOB!"**



We can't see his face, but from the haircut, it's clear that the person Chiri's berating is Kouji Kumeta himself. He's watching a news report about Chill Itoshiki (mentioned in a previous liner note), and the poster on his wall is a picture of Rumiko Takahashi's Inuyasha. Unfortunately, Kumeta's room seems to be filled with boxes upon boxes of returned manga.

### **10.10.21:15 MAKE ANOTHER MIRACLE HAPPEN**

On October 10, 2008, the Yomiuri Giants achieved a dramatic come-from-behind win against the Yakult Swallows to clinch the #1 spot in the Central League.

In Japanese, the text "make another miracle happen" is written here as "meiku mirakuru okawari" (メイクミラクルおかわり). Literally, this means, "Another 'make miracle'". Back in 1995, Giants baseball player Shigeo Nagashima started using the term "make drama" (メイクドラマ) in reference to a dramatic come-from-behind win; and as the team became stronger in the late 90s and 2000s, the phrase was changed to "make miracle" - in other words, whether you're behind or ahead, win in such a dramatic fashion that it seems miraculous.

### **10.25.16:03 GIANTS PREDICTED TO WIN 4-2**

This is referring to the final game of the Central League postseason playoff series. It was held on October 25th, 2008, and it was the Giants vs. the Chunichi Dragons. The Giants did win the game, but the final score was 6-2. They did even better than predicted!

### **(SHIN) TANI KYOKO THIS MAMA'S GOIN' FOR THE GOLD**

Ryoko Tani is a gold medalist in judo. She won her first gold medal in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, and has many other awards besides. In 2005, she ended up withdrawing from the world judo championships because she was pregnant. But she planned to go right back to competing after her child was born. "I'm going to keep practicing," she said. "As Tamura [her maiden name], I got a gold medal; as Tani, I got a gold medal; so I hope to also get a gold medal as a mother." When the 2008 Olympics came around, "This mama's goin' for the gold" was her slogan.

Ryoko Shintani, meanwhile, is Nami's voice actress.



**"I KNOW THAT I MUST DO MY JOB ALL THE SAME."**



As Nozomu says this, there's an image of a man dancing in a white outfit, with a tan hat and belt. This is comedian Hitoshi Ueki, from the video for a song called "Suudara-bushi". It was written by his jazz band The Crazy Cats in 1961. The song is about a man who does self-destructive things like getting drunk, gambling, and cheating on women. He knows that these things are bad, but he can't stop himself from doing them.

## **AKB47**

AKB48 is a pop idol group made up of dozens of girls, similar to Morning Musume. In 2008, one of the girls, Ayaka Kikuchi, was fired from the group after it was discovered that she had a boyfriend, which was a violation of her management agency's policy. So the joke is, now there's one less girl, which makes the band AKB47.

However, contrary to popular belief, AKB48 doesn't actually have 48 members. The number goes up and down, but as of this writing, AKB48 is currently made up of 80 members split up across five teams. Rather, the 48 comes from the fact that the group's President has an office called "Office 48".

## **WATCHING ANIME ON 1SEG DURING A NATIONAL DIET MEETING**

On October 3rd, 2008, Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy Kaoru Yosano and Minister of Finance Shouichi Nakagawa were caught using their mobile phones during a session of the House of Councillors. They were watching 1seg, a data broadcasting service that let users view TV stations via mobile phone. The poster here in Zetsubou-sensei is joking that Yosano and Nakagawa were using 1seg to watch anime, but in truth, they were using it to watch how the diet session was being re-reported in the media.

## ACCOUNTS ARE BEING RECALCULATED FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE

As if the great pension scandal of 2007 wasn't enough, in 2008, it was revealed that the Social Insurance Agency in charge of pension records had also falsified well over 1.44 million accounts. What happened was, as pension premiums kept increasing over the years, some companies were falling short on their payments. So the SIA, in order to keep money flowing in, compromised with the delinquent companies and let them report lower monthly salaries for their employees. This was great for the companies (they could pay less in pension premiums) and the SIA (they could keep their collection bonuses) - but it was awful for the actual employees, who had no idea this was happening, and who would end up with smaller pension payouts in the future because less money had been put into the system on their behalf.

## COMEDY ISLAND PLAN!!



Sado Island is a relatively large island to the west of Niigata Prefecture. Historically, it was a place where political prisoners or dissidents were exiled. But nowadays, it's a regular island with towns and villages, just like anywhere else. In 2005, as part of an effort to revitalize the island after a large earthquake, a campaign was concocted called the "Sado Comedy Island Plan". The idea was to have comedians live on Sado Island as "comedy goodwill ambassadors", where they would "draw out the appeal of Sado" for a new generation of young people.

## MONEY FROM OAD SALES GOES TOWARDS ODA.

This (fake) message is from "Akamatsu" - Ken Akamatsu that is, the author of the Negima! series. In 2008, a 3-episode OAD called Negima! Master Negi Magi ~The White Wing Ala Alba~, was released with Negima! manga volumes 23 through 25.

If you remember from previous liner notes, in 1979, after the "Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between Japan and China" was signed, Japan began a program called Official Development Assistance (ODA). Over the next forty years, Japan provided 3.6 trillion yen in aid to China in the form of loans and grants, in exchange for China



abandoning their compensation demands for the events of World War II. Thus, the first part of “Akamatsu’s” statement is saying that funds earned from the Negima! OAD release will be put directly towards ODA support for China.

The second part of the statement is: “We also donate hometown taxes.” Hometown tax is a system that allows people who grew up in rural areas to continue to support their hometown, even if they move to a big city later in their life. So, for example, if you grew up in a small town and then moved to Tokyo, you can opt to donate money to the small town where you grew up, and then a part of that donation will be deducted from your income and inhabitant taxes.

### **MY DEARE**

Eriko Iwamoto, the elder sister of famous singer-songwriter Keisuke Kuwata, died in October 2008 of cancer. She was 56 years old. Keisuke and his sister were very close; she even helped him create English lyrics for his songs, since she spent 20 years in the US. One of Keisuke’s most famous hits, “My Dear Eri”, was dedicated to his wife, but it was also a farewell to his sister as she went to go live overseas.

### **THINK ABOUT IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND! IT'S NOT THAT WE SOLD HALF AS MUCH, THEY JUST SOLD TWICE AS MUCH!**

This comment comes from Kouji Kumeta himself, who was running a cost comparison between Goku Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei and Negima! Master Negi Magi ~The White Wing Ala Alba~. The Negima! OAD ended up with a bigger budget and higher sales numbers, which just served as more fuel for Kumeta’s one-sided rivalry with Negima! author Ken Akamatsu.

### **LONELY TROPICAL FISH!**

This is the title of a pop song from 1989, sung by the duo Wink. The lyrics are about a lonely girl sitting by the pool, pining after a boy who never returns her love.

### **98.06.14 14:30 KICKOFF**

Keeping in line with Nozomu’s story, this is the kickoff date for the match between Japan and Argentina during the 1998 World Cup, held in France. The time is also accurate - the game started at 7:30 AM in France, which was 2:30 PM in Japan.

### **"EVEN A KID LIKE ME KNOWS THIS."**

While Majiru is saying this, the camera pans up the wall in his room, starting from the floor. And of course, there are little references sprinkled all over. Starting with:

- The can of juice on the floor has a picture of an odd little green caterpillar on it, along with the letter “U” (う). It’s supposed to be Ume Aoki, the creator of the Hidamari Sketch manga. In the anime version of Hidamari Sketch, she provides the voice for the caterpillar creature seen here.

- Further up, there’s a cardboard box that has “contains meat buns” written on it. This is referencing yet another Chinese food scandal. In 2007, a journalist named Zi Beijia ran an investigative report on a shop that was making baozi (meat buns) by creating a filling that was 40 percent meat, and 60 percent pulped cardboard. He filmed their cooking process, and then actually tried eating one, saying that it was “kind of tough” and didn’t have much taste. The report caused a huge uproar, especially since China was already feeling international pressure

over several food and product safety scandals.

- Most of the faces on Majiru's posters are covered, but the one that says "MGS4" is a picture of Akina Minami. She's a pinup girl who appeared on several posters in Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots for the PlayStation 3.

- The girl with the bubbly purple hair on the poster that says "KAWORI" is from a pachislot game called Avant Garde. Released in 2008, Avant Garde featured videos of real-life models as part of its gameplay, along with the usual animated fare. And "Kawori" is Majiru's favorite blog star, Kaori Manabe. She's one of the many girls who appears in the game, and she writes her name in Japanese a little strangely: "かをり", which is technically Romanized as "Kawori", instead of the usual "かおり" which is Romanized as "Kaori".

### **LITTLE JACKPOT ♡ "RABU-RABU!"**



The woman wearing glasses and making a heart shape with her hands is Kaori Manabe. As mentioned in the previous liner note, Kaori Manabe is one of many girls featured in a pachislot game called Avant Garde. In Avant Garde, all the images on the slot machine reels are different idol girls - and if the player is lucky enough to get matching images, the girls on the reels make that heart shape with their hands and say "Rabu rabu!" ("Love love!")

As for "little jackpot", that's a type of payout system in pachislot games. A little jackpot doesn't last as long as a normal jackpot, and the payout gates will close after a short time, even if no pachinko balls have gone through them.

### **GOOD ANIME, BAD ANIME, THAT'S UP TO INDIVIDUAL TASTE.**

The text that appears here is an altered version of a line from Pokémon Gold/Silver/Crystal. The original quote is from Karen, a trainer with the Indigo Elite Four:

*"Good Pokémon, bad Pokémon, that's up to individual perception. Real trainers strive to let the Pokémon they like do the talking for them."*



## **IPHONES SOLD OUT 08.07.11 12:00 UP**

There are a few different things to take in here. First, the date on the screen: July 11, 2008, really is the date that the iPhone 3G was officially released in Japan. It was very popular at launch, but after a month or so, sales cooled down, and it would be a few years before they picked back up again.

Second, the only carrier with the license to sell iPhones at launch was SoftBank, and the CEO of SoftBank is a man named Masayoshi Son (thus the “SonBank” signs in Zetsubou-sensei).

And finally, we can see Nozomu standing in shock outside the SonBank store. He must not have gotten a phone, because in the very next shot, there are tears in his eyes.

**"THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I HAVE TO SUPPORT AMERICA, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THEY WON'T KEEP THEIR WORD!"**

The politician speaking here is a caricature of Youhei Kouno. When the US coalition invaded Iraq in 2003 and triggered the Iraq War, Kouno - who at the time was Speaker of the House of Representatives of Japan - questioned America's actions, but in the end defended them as “an unavoidable conclusion.”

**"WE HAVE TO GO LOOK FOR WMDs, EVEN THOUGH WE KNOW THERE AREN'T ANY THERE!"**

This is another reference to the Iraq War. America's rationale for invading Iraq was based on claims that Iraq was building WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction), and thus posed an international threat. However, this claim was not universally accepted. Even within the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, there were those who sharply disagreed with the conclusion that Iraq was building WMDs. For example, one report said that Iraq had obtained large quantities of aluminum tubes, which could be used for uranium enrichment. But the Department of Energy experts explained that the tubes were poorly suited for such a task, and instead were probably intended for artillery rockets.

After the war, it was discovered that Iraq hadn't conducted biological weapons research since 1996, and there were no caches of chemical weapons munitions.

## **BAKABON'S DAD'S DAD**

This part of the episode is based on manga chapter 150, which was published on August 20th, 2008. Shortly before this, on August 2nd, 2008, Fujio Akatsuka passed away. He was a famous manga artist with several popular comedy manga under his belt, including the long-running series Tensai Bakabon. Bakabon is a character in the manga, but the real star of the series is his ridiculous father, known simply as “Bakabon's Dad”. And since Fujio Akatsuka drew the manga, in a way, that makes him “Bakabon's Dad's Dad”. This sign on the wall is a tribute message for him.

## **THE LOS ANGELES CASE HAS COME TO AN END**

In 1981, businessman Kazuyoshi Miura and his wife Kazumi were visiting Los Angeles, when an unknown assailant shot Kazuyoshi in the leg, and Kazumi in the head. Kazumi fell into a coma and died a year later. Kazuyoshi claimed that a robbers had killed his wife, and he used his position to write President Ronald Reagan and

California Governor Jerry Brown, asking them to clean up the violence in Los Angeles.

However, in 1984, the investigative magazine Shuukan Bunshun revealed that Kazuyoshi had taken out a 1.4 million dollar life insurance policy on his wife. What's more, an actress claiming to be Kazuyoshi's lover had come forward saying that he asked her to kill his wife. Soon after, Kazuyoshi was arrested. Even though Kazuyoshi lived in Japan, Los Angeles County also issued a warrant for his arrest on charges of murder and conspiracy to commit murder, since the incident happened on US soil.

In 1994, Kazuyoshi was convicted of his wife's murder, and sentenced to life in prison. However, he then appealed to the Tokyo High Court. After four years of deliberation, his conviction was overturned; the court concluded that there wasn't enough evidence to identify the assailant. In 2003, Japan's Supreme Court also acquitted him, and he was free to go.

He wasn't free to go everywhere, though. He still had an outstanding warrant in the US. So in February 2008, when Kazuyoshi traveled to the US territory of Saipan, he was arrested. He was supposed to be extradited to California for trial, but he fought against it for seven months. In September 2008, the Los Angeles Supreme Court dropped the murder charge, since it would be a case of double jeopardy, but ruled that the charge of conspiracy to commit murder was still valid.

Kazuyoshi gave up the fight against his extradition, and arrived in Los Angeles on October 10, 2008. That night, he was found dead in his cell, having hanged himself with his own shirt. And that is how the tragic "Los Angeles Case" came to an end.

## **INSTANT RAMEN RICE EEL GYOZA GREEN BEANS KONJAC MILK BEEF**

These are all foods that were at the center of scandals in Japan in the 2000s.

- **Instant ramen:** In October 2008, there was a massive recall of Cup Noodle brand instant noodles after a woman fell ill after eating noodles that were tainted with insecticide.

- **Rice:** This is the Mikasa Foods rice scandal mentioned in a previous liner note. The fallout from the sale of industrial-use rice as food was immense; seventeen companies lost over 3 billion yen, the President of Mikasa Foods along with four other people at the company were arrested, the Minister of Agriculture was forced to resign, and the president of a rice distributor in Nara ended up committing suicide.

- **Eel:** In June 2008, two seafood dealers were caught mislabeling Chinese eels as coming from Aichi Prefecture. The Chinese eels weren't selling well thanks to all the imported food scares.

- **Gyoza:** This is the "poisoned gyoza" scandal that's been mentioned in previous liner notes. A disgruntled factory worker in China injected pesticides into gyoza on three separate occasions, which led to ten people being hospitalized with serious illness, including a five-year-old girl who went into a coma.

- **Green beans:** In October 2008, a woman was hospitalized after eating frozen green beans from China which were contaminated with insecticide. After a thorough search of the factory, no other contaminated foods were found. Investigators found a small hole in the bag that con-



tained the poisoned beans, suggesting that the tampering happened somewhere between the factory in China and the supermarket in Japan.

- **Konjac:** Konjac is a root vegetable that's dried and pulverized into a powder, then used in all sorts of things like bread, noodles, and gelatin desserts. The gelatin desserts, called "konjac jellies", are a popular treat... but because gelatin made with konjac powder doesn't dissolve as quickly as normal gelatin, the jellies are also a choking hazard. In 2008, after a one-year-old boy died eating a konjac jelly, investigators revealed that over the past decade, 17 children and elderly people had choked to death on the sweet treat. Japan's largest maker of konjac jellies, a company called MannanLife, immediately halted all production and shipments of the jellies.

- **Milk:** This is referring to the Sanlu Milk scandal, mentioned in a previous liner note. Chinese company Sanlu added melamine to their milk, in order to make it appear to have more protein. But because melamine also causes kidney damage in humans, over 50,000 children were hospitalized due to drinking Sanlu milk, and six babies died.

- **Beef:** This is the Meat Hope scandal mentioned in a previous liner note. In 2007, Meat Hope, a meat processing company, was caught padding their “100% beef” with all sorts of fillers like mutton, rabbit, innards, and bread scraps. They went out of business soon after.

**DON'T BE DUMB! HOPELESS FIGHTS ARE WAY MORE FUN!**


This is an iconic line from the 1990 manga *Hana no Keiji*, illustrated by Fist of the North Star manga artist Tetsuo Hara. The main character of *Hana no Keiji*, Keiji Maeda, is a free-spirited samurai who's rough around the edges, but this is his philosophy when it comes to facing a difficult fight.

"WORKING WITH NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT HAS MADE ME LOSE ALL HOPE!"



There are a couple things going on here. First off, the logo in the background that says “The Zetsubou Century” (絶望の20世紀) is a play on the NHK TV series The 20th Century in Pictures (映像の20世紀). It was a 50-episode documentary show that began airing in 1999, featuring historical film footage from famous events and places throughout the 20th century.

And then of course, rolling over the top of this logo is another one of Nozomu’s big lists! Here are all the examples scrolling by:

- 
- **Professional swimmers who wear suits other than Speedos, knowing they can’t win:** In 2008, the swimwear company Speedo released a suit called the LZR Racer. It had welded seams and multiple woven fabrics, and had even been optimized using NASA wind tunnels. It reduced drag by up to six percent, and Popular Science magazine called it “the fastest swimsuit in the world”. It made swimmers so fast that in 2009, the International Swimming Federation banned the LZR Racer from being worn in competitions. But it was too late - by that time, swimmers in LZR Racers had already broken over 40 world records.
  - **Movie theaters that run the first showing of the day, even if no one’s there:** Due to the nature of film reels, which are fragile and prone to attracting dust, once a movie starts playing, it usually won’t be stopped. If it’s clear no one is in the theater, the projectionist usually shuts off the bulb in the projector, but keeps the film running. This helps prolong the longevity of the bulb, which is very expensive, and at the same time, prevents all the problems that come with stopping a reel of film in the middle of playing it. If you were to walk into the empty theater, you would hear the movie playing, but there would be no picture.
  - **A Ferris wheel turning while no one’s on it:** Such a poetic representation of futility.
  - **Winning big money in the Dragon Quest casino:** Even if you strike it rich, the casino tokens you earn in Dragon Quest games can only be used for prize rewards. You can’t cash them out for in-game gold, and you certainly don’t get any real-life money for it.
  - **Car washes that stay open when it rains:** Rainwater contains dirt and other contaminants which leave behind spots when they dry. And if you happen to drive through a puddle, you’re also driving through a collection of oil and grease. So if you get your car washed while it’s raining, all that cleanliness will be undone by the time you drive it home.
  - **Fire trucks that have to be sent out, even though they know the report is probably a prank:** Frustrating, but better to be safe than sorry.
  - **A man who flies away using balloons, knowing it won’t work out:** On April 20, 1992, a man named Yoshikazu Suzuki tied four enormous balloons to a chair and used them to fly from Ota in Tokyo to Kujikiri Beach in Chiba, a distance of almost 40 miles. Even though he ended up crash landing into

the roof of a building, that didn’t deter him at all. Later that same year, he unveiled the Fantasy, a six-foot gondola attached to six balloons that were 20 feet in diameter, and twenty balloons that were 10 feet in diameter. Then suddenly, on November 23, at 4:20 in the afternoon, Yoshikazu jumped into the Fantasy and took off. When asked where he was going, he said, “I’m going to America!” But of course, he didn’t make it. The last phone call he made to his family was at 6AM the next morning, when he told them that the morning sun was beautiful, and that



they shouldn't worry. He was last spotted off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture, with two of his four main balloons missing, and after that, he was never seen or heard from again.

• **Going out gambling, even though you know you're going to lose:** There's a reason that people say "the house always wins". Every game is designed so that the odds of the casino winning your money are higher than the odds of you winning the casino's money. What's more, statistically speaking, the longer people play, the worse their odds become. The one or two big wins gamblers might have are negated by the many small losses they're certain to experience for the rest of their time there. It's why casinos are so profitable, and have to be so heavily regulated.

• **Going to see Shyamalan movies, even though you know you'll be disappointed by the big twist:** American film director M. Night Shyamalan rose to international stardom with his 1999 film *The Sixth Sense*. It featured a wild, unexpected plot twist that audiences and critics loved. Next he wrote *Unbreakable*, which also had a big twist and was also very successful. From that point on, moviegoers expected all his movies to have a crazy plot twist at the end; but the truth is, if you go in expecting a surprise, it won't be that surprising. His next films - *Signs*, *The Village*, *Lady in the Water*, and *The Happening* - were mostly financially successful, but audience buzz decreased with each one.

• **Launching a new magazine, even though you know it'll just be cancelled:** There were several examples of this in the 2000s. One is *Comic Yoshimoto*, an anthology magazine from comedian talent agency Yoshimoto Kougyou. It started in June 2007 and was gone by that September. Another is *Comic Gumbo*, hailed as "the first free weekly manga magazine". *Comic Gumbo* at least lasted the full year - it started in January of 2007, and shut down in December.

• **Going to China, even though you know you're going to get ripped off:** This is referring to all the ticket scalping that happened during the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. According to government officials, scalpers would be "severely punished" - but that didn't stop hundreds of ticket resellers from peddling their overpriced wares in broad daylight. Eyewitnesses and journalists reported people selling tickets for vastly more than their worth, such as a Taipei-Cuba baseball game ticket which had a face value of \$7.25, but was being sold by the scalper for \$365.

• **Japan buying US Government Bonds:** Many countries buy US government bonds and other Treasury securities because they come with the US government's unconditional guarantee to back the debt, which makes them a safe investment option. Also, holding US dollars in bonds has its advantages, since the dollar is such a widely accepted currency in international trade. However, the downside is that Treasury bonds have a relatively low interest yield, which means that more money could have been made by investing in something with a higher return. For better or for worse, Japan has been a large purchaser of US Treasuries for decades now; as of 2023, the country holds over a trillion US dollars' worth of securities.

• **Releasing a weird soda, even though you know it won't sell:** In 2007, Pepsi released a limited edition soda flavor in Japan called Ice Cucumber.

The drink itself was a light green color similar to mouthwash, and the slogan claimed it had "a hint of the sweet fragrance of cucumber". Reports say that it tasted like a mint-flavored, extra-sweet version of regular Pepsi, with no cucumber taste, just a vague cucumber smell. Once Ice Cucumber Pepsi sold through its initial run, it never returned to store shelves.

• **Putting 100,000 yen into a pachinko machine, and getting a little jackpot:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, little jackpots don't last as long as a normal jackpots, and the payout gates will close after a short time, even if no pachinko balls have gone through them. So basically, even though little jackpots have a higher chance of appearing, the player can get one and still end up without any sort of payout. (By the way, 100,000 yen is approximately \$1000.)

• **Doing a headfirst slide after an easy fly ball in the bottom of the 9th inning when your team is about to lose 12-0:** This is an example of extreme effort that won't affect the outcome of the game at all. Headfirst slides are tricky and potentially dangerous, and especially not worth it if the ball you just hit is about to be caught, ending the game. But in the cutthroat world of Japanese high school baseball, effort like this can sometimes be seen, perhaps as a way of impressing any potential scouts.

• **Playing Murder on the Mississippi without a strategy guide:** Murder on the Mississippi is a detective game that was released in 1986 for computer platforms like the Commodore 64 and the Apple II. But it also got a Famicom release in Japan, where it rose to fame as a legendarily awful game. There was no save feature, the game was full of instant-death traps, you couldn't re-interview suspects, and the win conditions were incredibly obtuse.

• **Digging for buried treasure, even though you know you won't find it:** There have been many tales of buried treasure throughout the ages, like Butch Cassidy's hidden treasure, or the Treasure of Lima. Japan has their own stories of buried treasure, as well. For example, it's said that Ieyasu Tokugawa, first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate, buried more than 400 golden koban coins somewhere in Gunma prefecture. But to this day, no one has found them yet.

• **Parents trying hard to come up with a unique name for their child, even though the kid will be bullied because of it:** Many countries actually have laws against giving children names that will lead to them being ridiculed later in life. In Mexico, banned names include Robocop, Scrotum, and Facebook. Malaysia has restrictions on names like Hunchback, Smelly Head, and Insane. And in Japan, in 1994, a man from Akishima ran afoul of the government when he tried to name his son Akuma, which means "devil". The father argued that "Akuma is such an impressive name that people will never forget a person with that name... This will give him opportunities to meet various kinds of people." A local government official rebutted that "naming his son 'devil' could adversely affect the boy, and it would be in the boy's interest to forbid it."

• **Low-ranking politicians who are part of the proportionally represented constituency:** Understanding this one requires a bit of knowledge about the Japanese political system. When it comes to voting in elections for the House of Representatives, each Japanese voter casts two ballots. There's the single-seat constituency, which is similar to the American method: voters choose from among a list of candidates, and the ones with the most votes win. But there's also a second ballot for the proportionally represented constituency. Here, the voter chooses from a list of political parties. Then, when all the votes are tallied, each party is granted seats according to the percentage of votes they received. Parties make ranked lists of their potential candidates to be elected, and any seats that are won are filled in order according to that list. But let's say that a party wins a certain number of seats, but doesn't have enough people on their list to fill all the seats - in a situation like that, the seats would be given to another party, which could be politically disadvantageous. Thus, powerful parties tend to make sure they have a lot of people on their list. So basically, if you're on the low end of a political party's candidate list, you're probably just there to put your butt in a seat, and you have very little actual power.



• **Working hard to make something that will go on sale immediately:** This is something that happens often with anime and games. A lot of people put a lot of effort into making something for audiences to enjoy, but due to the sheer amount of content that exists, most anime and games end up in bargain bins quickly after release.

• **Being a Production Assistant:** In the anime world, a Production Assistant helps to set schedules, manages the animation staff, and does all sorts of tasks to keep the production running. It's the type of job that's usually taken up by young people who dream of being a Director or a Producer. However, animators can often be peculiar and hard to work with, and anime production schedules are incredibly hard to manage. Many people who take up the role of Production Assistant end up burning out before they have the chance to get promoted.

• **A confession of love from an idol that you've managed for a year:** This is referring to the iDOLM@STER series of games, where you play the role of a producer who trains prospective pop idols. Depending on how you interact with the girls, they can eventually confess their feelings for you. But part of the gameplay is that you only manage a girl for a year, so if she falls in love with you at the end of that year, it doesn't matter, because your time with her is up anyway. (This one year limitation was eventually removed in later sequels.)

• **Confessing your love to Akina:** In 2008, the pinup model Akina Minami appeared at a promotional event for the second season of Mobile Suit Gundam 00, dressed up as the tactical operator Feldt Grace. When the interviewer asked her who her favorite character was, she responded, "Tieria Erde". Then Hiroshi Kamiya, who was also on stage (and voices Tieria) immediately blurted out, "So, will you go out with me? Please go out with me!" She declined, saying that she liked Tieria because he had glasses, but Kamiya doesn't wear glasses. Too bad!

• **Begging for anime versions of Kaizou and Southern:** "Kaizou" and "Southern" are Katte ni Kaizou and Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club, two of Kouji Kumeta's previous manga that he made before Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club was never animated, but Katte ni Kaizou did eventually get a 6-episode OVA in 2011.

## WE'RE SO THANKFUL!! HARD WORK HAS PAID OFF EX: PANIPONI

This is referring to the DVD box set of Pani Poni Dash!, which was released in Japan in April 2009. It included a special OVA, which was the first brand new Pani Poni Dash! animation in almost four years.

## MAEDAX FIGURE THANK YOU, MAEDA KAMIYA BROKE IT

In the original manga version of this story, there was a poster on the wall saying, "Please make a MAEDAX figure. Signed, Mae\*\*". And someone actually did make one! It was



a hand-sculpted figure of Maeda-kun wearing a blue shirt and underwear. And then, on episode 59 of Sayonara Zetsubou Housou, Kamiya announced that he had dropped it and broken it. The picture of the broken figure looks just like it's drawn here in the show.

## GRATS ON PANI PONI

This is another reference to the Pani Poni Dash! DVD box set mentioned a couple notes ago.

## WEEKLY SHOUNEN SUNDAY VS. WEEKLY SHOUNEN MAGAZINE



As mentioned in a previous liner note, 2009 was the 50th anniversary for both Weekly Shounen Sunday and Weekly Shounen Magazine. As part of the anniversary celebration, a trading card game was released that featured characters from several series across both magazines. Its name was very straightforward: The Sunday vs. Magazine Trading Card Game.

The cards that show up here are Rando from Go!! Southern Ice Hockey Club on the left, and Katsu from Katte ni Kaizou on the right. Rando never had a card in the actual card game, but Katsu did (even though its design was a bit different). Each card in the game had a Partner Card, and the partner for both Rando and Katsu is listed here as “Kouji Kumeta”.

## NO LONGER THAN 55MM

Japan has very strict rules about possessing guns and knives. Before 2008, the Firearm and Sword Possession Control Law completely forbade the possession of handguns, and prohibited the ownership of knives longer than 15cm (6 inches). However, after the Akihabara massacre in June 2008, where the killer stabbed people using a 13cm (5 inch) dagger, the law was revised. As of November 2008, any knife carried in public must be no longer than 55mm (2 inches).

## I'M NOT IPPO! I'M HIS BROTHER, NIHO!

When Kafuka mentions “the shocking final chapter of Ippo”, she’s referring to Hajime no Ippo, the famous boxing manga that’s been running since 1989 - and as of this writing, it’s still going!



The joke here is that Ippo is the main character's name, but the kanji used for "ippo" also mean "one step" (一步). If you change the kanji to "two steps" (二步), that would be pronounced Niho.

In the manga panel that Kafuka has dreamed up, one of the other Hajime no Ippo characters, Mamoru Takamura, is punching "Niho", a guy who looks just like Ippo and claims to be his brother. But in the actual manga, Ippo was an only child.

## **GAYER THAN GAY**

The Japanese text on the sign is "gachi na ue de homo". It's a mashup of two things: one is the term "gachihomo", which means "a person who is genuinely gay"; and the other is the Japanese title for the Studio Ghibli movie Ponyo, which is Gake no ue no Ponyo ("Ponyo on the Cliff"). Put the two together in this manner, and you end up with a phrase that literally means "even more homosexual than a real homosexual".

## **NO. 21 – KAERE**

This is what a status screen for Kaere would look like if she were a monster from the Pokémon series. It's worth noting that "Transform" and "Captivate" are both real moves in Pokémon, although Transform is a Normal-type move, not Psychic.

Also, if she's 48kg, that's only 106 lbs., which is very underweight for someone who's 175cm tall (5'7").

## **RETURN MY ARTWORK!!**

The manga series Konjiki no Gash!! (known in the US as Zatch Bell) was published in Shogakukan's Weekly Shounen Sunday magazine. When the series finally ended in December 2007, the original artwork was returned to Zatch Bell's creator, Makoto Raiku. But unfortunately, five color art pieces were missing. These pieces were both valuable and irreplaceable, so Raiku ended up suing Shogakukan for 3.3 million yen.

## **"I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO READING THE 'I WON'T DO IT ANYMORE' TRIAL REPORT."**

Mou, Shimasen Kara ("I Won't Do It Anymore") is a 2004 manga by Hideo Nishimoto which ran in Weekly Shounen Magazine. It's a cross between a gag manga and a documentary series, focusing on behind-the-scenes information about various manga series and the artists who create them.

With this sentence, Nozomu is saying that he wanted to see how the Zatch Bell trial, mentioned in the previous liner note, would have been explained in the pages of Mou, Shimasen Kara.

## **I'LL GIVE YOU MY OAD, SO COME OVER**

Harumi is imagining Negi, the main character of the Negima! series, texting someone from an online dating service and offering the OAD Negima! Master Negi Magi ~The White Wing Ala Alba~ as an incentive to pay him a visit.

## **THERE'S ALWAYS AN ANIME ADAPTATION AFTER A DRAMA ADAPTATION, RIGHT?**

This text, along with Abiru's description, are referring to a manga series called Shibatora. It's about a rookie cop named Taketora Shibata who has the ability to see "the reaper's hands" around people whose lives are in danger. He looks incredibly young for his age,

so Abiru is imagining an episode where he goes out with a literal grade-school girl. As for the text “There’s always an anime adaptation after a drama adaptation, right?”, Shibatora was made into a live-action TV drama in July of 2008. But unfortunately, Abiru’s prediction didn’t come true, and no anime version was ever produced.

### **MARIA POISONING 801 ANIME LET US DO IT!**

The Japanese phrase used here for “Maria Poisoning” is “Maria chuudoku”. This can also mean “Maria Addiction”, or in other words, Maria Holic, a 2009 anime produced by SHAFT.

“801 Anime”, meanwhile, is referring to My Neighbor 801-chan, a webcomic from 2006 about a male otaku and his yaoi-obsessed girlfriend. In 2008, Kyoto Animation announced that they would be producing an anime version of the story, but a couple months later, they withdrew the announcement and the show was cancelled before it even began. Thus, “Let us do it!” is a message from the SHAFT animators asking if they can take a crack at it.

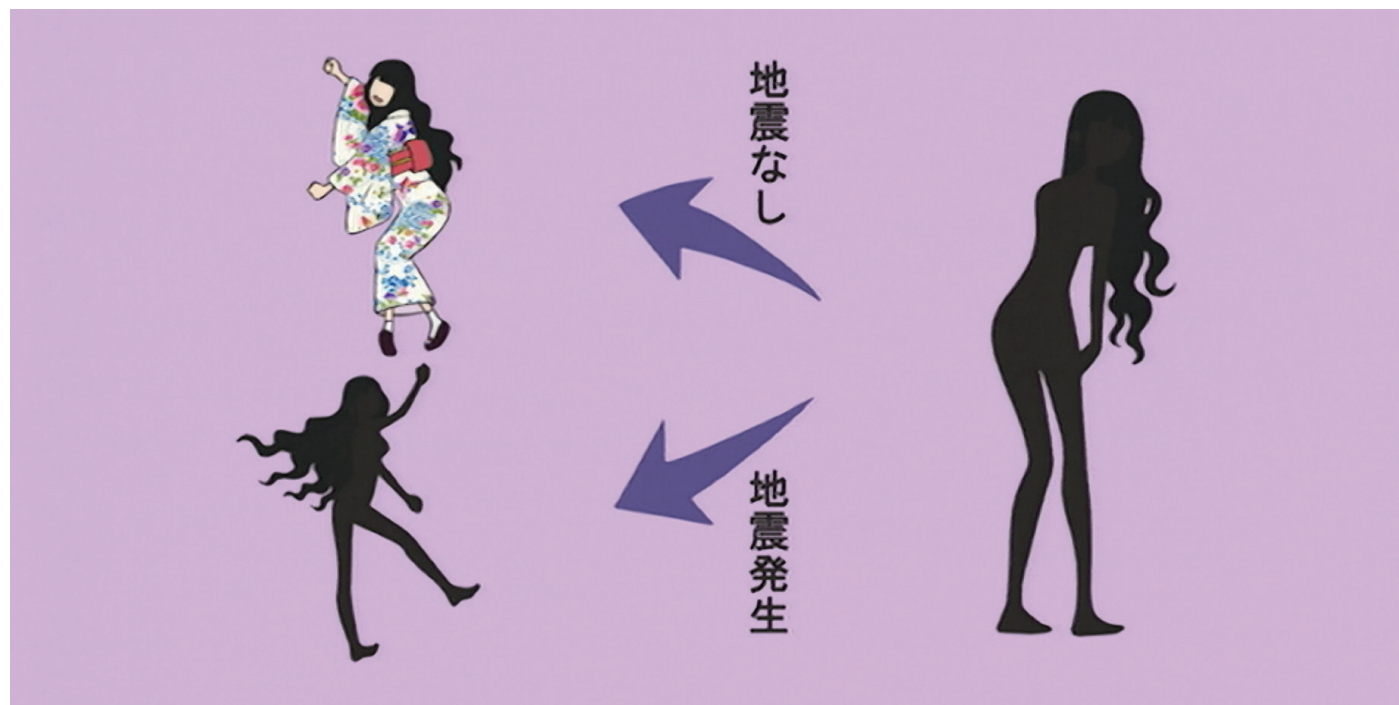
### **09.07 19:07 7TH LITTLE JACKPOT (RABU RABU)**

If you’ve been keeping up with the liner notes so far, you’ve probably already figured out that this is another reference to Avant Garde, the pachinko game featuring real-life idols. Apparently whoever’s putting this scene together expects to hit their 7th little jackpot by 7:07PM.

### **09.15 19:02 RECORD PICKUPS (MIEKO MATSUKI)**

Mieko Matsuki is better known by her stage name, Miyu Matsuki. She’s the voice actress for Harumi. This note is saying that she needs to come back to record some lines that were either missed or changed (or perhaps she missed a day of group recording, for whatever reason).

### **"DOES THIS MEAN THERE ARE TWO PARALLEL TIMELINES?!"**



As Chiri panics over the implications of there being two different Rins, we’re shown Rin and Shadow Rin dancing. This is a reference to the opening sequence of the Sunrise show Overman King Gainer, where several characters, including the giant robot King Gainer, do the Monkey Dance.



## L-TYPE R-TYPE

R-Type is a space-themed horizontal shooter that released in arcades in 1987. In a magazine interview before the game's release, the developer said that the game was named R-Type because the ship could fire three different types of lasers. But the magazine editor responded, "If it's named after lasers, wouldn't that make it L-Type?" The developer immediately realized his mistake - "R" and "L" are the same sound in Japanese, and he had chosen the wrong letter for his title. The lore was quickly altered so that the R in R-Type stood for three different rays that the ship could fire, instead of lasers. But perhaps in a parallel timeline, the world got a hit arcade game in 1987 called "L-Type".

## "FOR INSTANCE, QUOTING SONG LYRICS LEFT AND RIGHT WITHOUT PAYING JASRAC FEES!"

The stage where Kafuka is dancing, with its simple setup and multicolored floor lights, is reminiscent of an audition stage in the idol-raising game iDOLM@STER. What's more, when Kafuka poses, the bursting rays and sparkle effects are just like the visual that's displayed when a girl "appeals" to an audition judge while performing.

During Kafuka's "appeal", she puts her hand up to her face, with her pinky, pointer finger, and thumb sticking out. This is Ranka Lee's signature pose from when she performs the song "Interstellar Flight" in the 2008 anime series Macross Frontier.

Also, for those who might not be familiar with the term, "JASRAC" stands for the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers. It's an organization that manages copyrights for songwriters and music publishers. Basically, if you use a song without getting the license for it first, they're the people who will come knocking at your door.

## "STORY IDEAS THAT WILL NEVER RUN HAVE MADE ME LOSE ALL HOPE!"



As Nozomu says this, many colorful examples come flying out of his mouth. However, they are largely censored, to the point that it's hard to identify most of them with anything specific. Here's what the text says:

- ■■■ dies!
- ■■■ should pay their taxes!
- ■■■ is a religious cult!
- ■■■■ defaults on their bonds!
- The only funny parts of ■■■■ were in the trailers
- ■■■■ eats somen at ■■■!
- ■■■ is digging for oil!

• ■shima is ours *[The censored name here is Takeshima, a group of islands that South Korea and Japan both claim as their territory]*

• A■■■■■ is a rip-off of ■■■■a! *[The full sentence here is: "Atlantis is a rip-off of Nadia!" Disney's 2001 movie Atlantis: The Lost Empire was incredibly similar to Gainax' 1990 anime series Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water. It was so blatant that fans called for Gainax to sue, but the company never did. In a 2000 interview, one of Gainax' founding members, Hiroyuki Yamaga, said, "We actually tried to get NHK to pick a fight with Disney, but even the National Television Network of Japan didn't dare to mess with Disney and their lawyers."]*

• Ya■■■ru is on TV! *[This is most likely Mitsuru Yaku, a manga artist who made two separate appearances on a TV show called Quiz \$ Millionaire. It was basically a Japanese version of the famous game show Who Wants to be a Millionaire?]*

• I asked Mae■ what ■ meant, but he didn't know *[Apparently someone asked Maeda-kun a question, but he had no idea what the answer was.]*

## YOU'RE PRETTY STUPID RUMBA K★TU

On May 29, 2008, the Yomiuri Giants were playing the Rakuten Eagles. In the bottom of the ninth inning, with two outs, Tatsunori Hara, the Giant's coach, gave the sign for Kenji Yano, the runner on first base, to try and steal second. Unfortunately, Kenji didn't make it, and that third out cost them the game.

Trying to steal second was a rather odd decision, risky and unnecessary. And Katsuya Nomura, the coach of the Rakuten Eagles, knew it. As reporters gathered around him to interview him after the game, instead of answering right away, he sang the words: "That was pretty stupid, rumba~!" He was singing the lyrics from "Bakka Janakaroka Rumba" ("You're Pretty Stupid, Rumba"), a 2006 song by the enka group Sakura to Issho.



## A NEW LOOK



As the third part of the episode begins, everyone and everything is drawn differently. All the characters have extremely large eyes, huge eyelashes, lanky limbs, and highly-detailed hair. It's an homage to Kiyo Qjo, the manga artist behind *Trinity Blood* and *Zone-00*, who draws in a similar style.

### STUDENT BOOK BORROWING RATE, SHOWA 81

You might remember from previous liner notes that the Showa period ended in 1989, which was Showa 64. "Showa 81" doesn't exist, but if it did, it would correspond with the year 2006.

### MASAO-KUN RETIRES

"Masao-kun" is actually the name of a Labrador retriever who traveled around the country on a TV show called *Pet Daishuugou! Pochi-tama* (In English, "The Great Gathering of Pets! Pochi-tama". "Pochi" is a generic dog name in Japan, sort of like "Spot" or "Rover" in the US.) He was retired from the program on October 13, 2006, just before his seventh birthday, and he died later that year on December 9th. His grave is at the Heiwakai Pet Memorial Park in Kawasaki.

Masao-kun's legacy lives on, though! Daisuke-kun, one of Masao's puppies, took his place on *Pet Daishuugou* after his retirement. And even though the TV show ended in 2010, one of Daisuke-kun's puppies, named Masaharu, travels around with his owner and the videos are posted on YouTube.

(By the way, Nozomu is reading this article in the "Ikkei Shimbun". It's a play on a real-life newspaper called *Sankei Shimbun*. Even though the "san" in *Sankei Shimbun* is short for "sangyou" ("industry"), "san" can also mean "three", and so for this joke, they've changed the "three" ("san") to "one" ("i") and made it "Ikkei Shimbun".)

## **THE NAME OF THE ROWS OF BOOKS**

This episode title is a twist on *The Name of the Rose*, a mystery novel written by Italian author Umberto Eco.

## **TOWARD A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY**

This has come up in previous liner notes, but just as reminder, *Toward a Beautiful Country* was written by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Also, for those unfamiliar with the acronym, WBC is short for World Baseball Classic, an international baseball tournament.

## **DOWNWARDLY MOBILE SOCIETY**

This was written by sociologist and marketing researcher Atsushi Mura. Essentially, it's about the collapse of the middle class in Japan, and the rise of a new class of people who feel no desire to work or seek education due to lower income and opportunity.

## **TO THE SPRING EQUINOX AND BEYOND**

This is a novel by acclaimed Japanese author Natsume Souseki. It's the story of a sluggish college graduate named Keitaro, his friend Sunaga, and all the complicated relationships that surround them.

Nozomu's story about the title is actually very close to the truth! Natsume Souseki himself came up with the idea to call the story *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*. It was a serialized story which he started on New Year's Day in 1912, and he wanted the audience to know that he intended to keep it going for at least three months, past the spring equinox.

## **I WANT TO KICK YOU IN THE BACK**

Jun and Kuniya's contest begins with the book *I Want to Kick You in the Back* by Risa Wataya. It did indeed win the Akutagawa Prize, one of Japan's most prestigious literary awards. Here's the translation of the big summary that appears:

Hatsu had no partner for science class, so her eyes wandered over to the cover of a magazine that her classmate Ninagawa was reading. It featured a picture of the famous fashion model Ori-chan. Hatsu had met Ori-chan back in middle school, at a Muji store in a nearby town. Hatsu mentioned it to Ninagawa, and all of a sudden, he took an interest in her. After school, Ninagawa invited Hatsu to his house, where she learned that Ninagawa was a big fan of Ori-chan's. Eventually, Ninagawa asked Hatsu to take him to the Muji store where she met Ori-chan. Then, when the two of them were alone and resting back at Ninagawa's house, Hatsu found a picture that Ninagawa had made. It was Ori-chan's face pasted onto a nude woman's body. A strange feeling came over Hatsu, and she kicked him in the back as hard as she could, toppling him over.

After that, Ninagawa didn't come to school for the next four days. Hatsu found it unlikely that he was just skipping school, so she went to visit him at his house. Apparently, Ninagawa had caught a cold



after staying up all night trying to get tickets to an Ori-chan live show. Ninagawa managed to get four tickets, so he told Hatsu that she should pick someone to invite. Hatsu's only other friend was a girl named Kinuyo, so as a last resort, she invited Kinuyo, and the three of them went to the show together. Kinuyo kept bugging Hatsu, saying things like, "Ninagawa seems like he'd make a good boyfriend, right?" and "You really like Ninagawa, don't you?" Hatsu responded, "I don't feel that way about him." Or at least, that's what she thought.

## A LOST PARADISE

This second book is by Junichi Watanabe. When it was published in 1997, it became so popular that the Japanese title ("Shitsurakuen") became a slang word for "having an affair". Here's the summary translation:

Shuuichirou Kuki was a skilled editor at a publishing house. But one day, he was suddenly removed from his fast-paced editing position, and found himself stuck on a laid-back assignment over in the research department. Kuki felt dejected, but then he went to visit the Culture Center where his friend Kinugawa worked - and there, giving a lecture on calligraphy, was a beautiful married woman named Rinko Matsubara. She was well mannered and graceful, a true "master of calligraphy". Kuki, meanwhile, was overbearing and single-minded in professing his love for her. But eventually, she fell in love with him, too. Every weekend they would rendezvous with each other, and before she knew it, Rinko found herself caught up in the depths of pleasure and desire. Their relationship continued to escalate. Then, Rinko's adoptive father died. On the evening of his funeral, Kuki begged her to come meet him, so Rinko slipped away from her mother and husband and, still dressed in mourning clothes, went to the hotel where Kuki was staying. Rinko was wracked with guilt, but even still, their passion could not be contained. Before long, Kuki rented an apartment in Tokyo where the two of them could meet in secret.

Jun and Kuniya suggest the titles "An Affair in Karuizawa" and "Wine Kiss" because, at the end of the story, Kuki and Rinko commit double-suicide by drinking cyanide-laced wine at his villa in Karuizawa.

## "ALL RIGHT, THIS AND THIS AND THIS!"

Three books quickly flash by: Why Bamboo-Pole Sellers Won't Go Bankrupt and Other Accounting Mysteries, Grand Finale, and The Dignity of the Nation. They're by Shinya Yamada, Kazushige Abe, and Masahiko Fujiwara, respectively.

(The text "A revolutionary Japanese theory that will give pride and confidence to all Japanese people!", which we see instead of the title of the third book, is a quote that was used in its marketing.)

## "I'M TOO ASHAMED TO SHOW THE ORIGINAL TITLES!"

Try as he might, Nozomu can't block the original titles entirely - that, and the "new" titles help give the old ones away. The original book titles are:

- **A Sea With No Exit**, by Hideo Yokoyama. It's about soldiers training to be human torpedoes in World War II.

- **Grand Finale**, by Kazushige Abe. It's about a man who gets caught taking illicit pictures of his own daughter.

- "Leave Takeshima". This is a fake book title, and a reference to the ownership dispute between South Korea and Japan over a group of islets in the Sea of Japan. But if you change one of the kanji in the title, you get **Leave the Peninsula**, which is a book by Ryu Murakami about Korea invading Fukuoka.

- **Deep Love: Ayu's Story**, by Yoshi. It's about a high school girl who moonlights as a prostitute.

- **Why Bamboo-Pole Sellers Won't Go Bankrupt and Other Accounting Mysteries**, by Shinya zYamada. It's an economics book, and the "bamboo poles" it's referring to are the type that are used to dry laundry.

- **Dignity of the Nation**, by Masahiko Fujiwara. It's Fujiwara's criticism of Western individuality and democracy, with a call for Japan to return to the values of bushido. (The Shinbashi Underpass that Kuniya mentions is a long, dark tunnel filled with grungy bars and restaurants.)

**"IF YOU INSIST ON CHALLENGING HIM, PERHAPS A CHANGE OF VENUE IS IN ORDER!"**



Nozomu and the others end up at a video store named "Tatsuya". This is a spoof on the real-life rental chain Tsutaya, which has locations throughout Japan and Taiwan.

**"LOOKING AT MOVIE TITLES, 'MY SASSY GIRL' REALLY OUGHT TO BE 'MY VIOLENT GIRL'!"**

My Sassy Girl is a Korean romantic comedy from 2001. It was so popular that it became South Korea's highest-grossing comedy of all time, and it spawned remakes and adaptations all over the world. America's version of My Sassy Girl was released in 2008, starring Elisha Cuthbert and Jesse Bradford.



## "IN 'THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES', THE BIKE BREAKS DOWN IN THE FIRST 30 MINUTES."

The Motorcycle Diaries is a 2004 biopic about the life of Che Guevara. It was mostly based on Guevara's posthumously published memoir of the same name.

## "WITH MUSIC, THERE'S THIS SONG, 'ROBINSON.'"

Just to be clear, Nozomu is referring to the 1995 song "Robinson" by Japanese pop group Spitz, not the 1968 song "Mrs. Robinson" by Simon & Garfunkel.

## "EVERYTHING THAT'S NOT TRUE TO ITS NAME MUST BE CHANGED!"

Adding to all the examples that have been given so far, Nozomu has a whole extra list of games, magazines and movies that don't live up to their titles:

- **TOKYO 1 Week → TOKYO Two Weeks:** "TOKYO☆1 Week" was a magazine from Kodansha that was supposed to be a weekly update on happenings in the Tokyo area. However, when the magazine was first getting started, they struggled to meet the "one per week" deadline. They eventually settled on a biweekly format, but the name of the magazine wasn't changed to reflect that.

- **Dragon Quest 2 → Hargon Quest:** The main villain at the end of the first Dragon Quest game was the evil Dragon Lord. However, the villain in Dragon Quest 2 was a monster named Hargon. So perhaps "Hargon Quest" might have been a more truthful title.

- **Dr. Coto's Clinic 2006 → Nurse Aoi Yuu:** The first title is meant to be "Dr. Kotou's Clinic", the 2000 manga about a big city doctor who transfers to a small clinic on a remote island. The manga was so popular that it got a live-action TV series in 2003, and that TV series got a second season 2006. However, the second season focused a bit less on Dr. Kotou, and a bit more on a nurse named Mina Nakai, played by Yuu Aoi.

- **Tears For You → Miyuki, the Short Version:** The 2006 Japanese movie Nada Sousou ("Tears for You") is about a budding romance between a stepbrother and stepsister. Miyuki, the 1980 manga by Mitsuru Adachi, deals with the same subject.

- **April Snow → Spring Sonata:** April Snow is a South Korean movie from 2005 that starred Bae Yong-joon, the same actor who made it big in Japan with the TV series Winter Sonata in 2002. Broadly speaking, Winter Sonata's story was about love interrupted by an accident. April Snow also had the same overall theme. The joke here is that with the same theme and the same star, April Snow might as well have been called "Spring Sonata".

- **Brokeback Mountain → The Secret of H\*m\*h\*m\* Mountain:** On the surface, the 2005 American movie Brokeback Mountain seemed like a regular Western film. But it turned out to be a romance movie about two cowboys who were clandestine gay lovers. Thus the new title suggested here for the movie, "The Secret of Homohomo Mountain".

- **CASSHERN → Extended Utada Hikaru Music Video:** The 2004 Casshern movie was a live-action adaptation of the anime series of the same name from 1973. It was written and

directed by Kazuaki Kiriya, who was married to the pop singer Hikaru Utada at the time. So, unsurprisingly, she ended up singing the theme song for the movie, and many of the movie's stars appeared in her music video.

- **“Collage of Our Lives” → America is a Gun Society:** Collage of our Lives is a 2003 movie that's supposed to be about a photographer reuniting with his former girlfriend. But a large part of the film is actually about what happens to the two of them in New York - he gets mugged, taken in by a drug dealer, and shot at, and she ends up getting shot and murdered.

- **Lake of Illusions → A Sex Worker Goes to Space:** In 1982, acclaimed director Shinobu Hashimoto (who worked on films like Rashomon and Seven Samurai) released a film called Lake of Illusions. With a title like that, you might be surprised to learn that it was about a prostitute whose dog gets murdered, so she goes on a bizarre revenge quest which involves visions of the Sengoku period and an astronaut taking a magical flute into space. The film was removed from theaters after a single week.

## **"HOW IS AN INTELLIGENT WOMAN LIKE TAKIGAWA CHRISTEL INVOLVED?!"**

Christel Takigawa is a French-Japanese television announcer. She's been working in the news industry since the year 2000.

## **"THESE NAMES ARE ALL LIES!"**

And here's another list of names that Nozomu would change if he could:

- **FC Tokyo ought to be FC Chofu (Gamba Osaka ought to be Gamba Suita):** “FC Tokyo” is short for Football Club Tokyo, a Japanese professional soccer team. However, despite their name, they're based out of Chofu. The same goes for Gamba Osaka, which is another pro soccer team. Their hometown is actually Suita.

- **Giant Cone ice cream treats aren't very big now:** Giant Cone is a brand of pre-packaged ice cream cones with a chocolate coating on top. The name originally came from the fact that it was an oversized cone, but lately, they haven't been so oversized. This is a phenomenon called “shrinkflation”, and it's actually been happening to many products in Japan for the past several years. As the price of raw ingredients goes up, food manufacturers are reluctant to raise prices, so they reduce the size of the product instead.

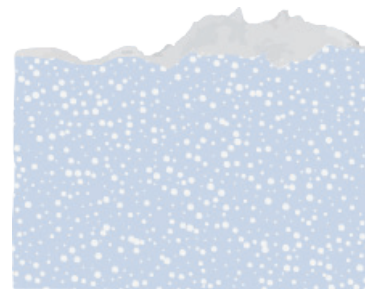
- **All-night family restaurants don't get many families:** There's a type of restaurant in Japan called a “family restaurant”. Think of them as the Japanese equivalent of Perkins or Denny's: they serve many different types of food at relatively low prices. Because of their casual atmosphere and broad menu, they're great for families with kids. But most family restaurants are also open 24 hours, and you won't find many families there at 3AM.

- **Level 2 blackout curtains only block 99.80-99.98% of light:** The Japan Interior Fabrics Association designates three different levels of blackout curtains. Grade 3 blocks 99.4%-99.8% of light, Grade 2 blocks 99.8%-99.98%, and Grade 3 blocks 99.99% or higher. The problem here is that if you buy anything other than Grade 3 curtains, they're not actually “blackout” curtains, are they?





• **He loves his bride, but is called Hard Gay:** Japanese comedian Masaki Sumitani gained international fame with a character he plays called Hard Gay. Hard Gay dresses in a tight gay fetish outfit made from PVC, and runs around thrusting his pelvis while shouting “foooooo!” But if anyone thought Masaki himself was actually homosexual, they were in for a shock when he ended up marrying Japanese swimsuit model Anna Suzuki in 2006.



• **His debut work is called “The Final Years”:** The first book ever published by the famous author Osamu Dazai was a collection of fourteen short stories. He wrote it during one of the many times in his life when he was contemplating suicide. The title “The Final Years” came from Dazai’s intention for it to be his first and last book - and though he did indeed attempt to take his own life after submitting the book for publication, he ended up surviving.

• **AKB48 doesn’t have 48 members:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, AKB48 doesn’t actually have 48 members. The number goes up and down, but as of this writing, AKB48 is currently made up of 80 members split up across five teams.

• **Yoiko (“Good Guys”) member does naughty things with Yuukorin:** Yoiko, which does indeed mean “good guys”, is the name of a comedy duo consisting of Shinya Arino and Masaru Hamaguchi. “Yuukorin”, meanwhile, is the nickname of pin-up girl Yuko Ogura. Yuko Ogura and Masaru Hamaguchi were rumored to be in a relationship in 2007, but neither of them would confirm it to the press. However, even if the rumors were true, the relationship didn’t last long. By the time 2011 rolled around, Yuko Ogura was married to a man named Isao Kikuchi.

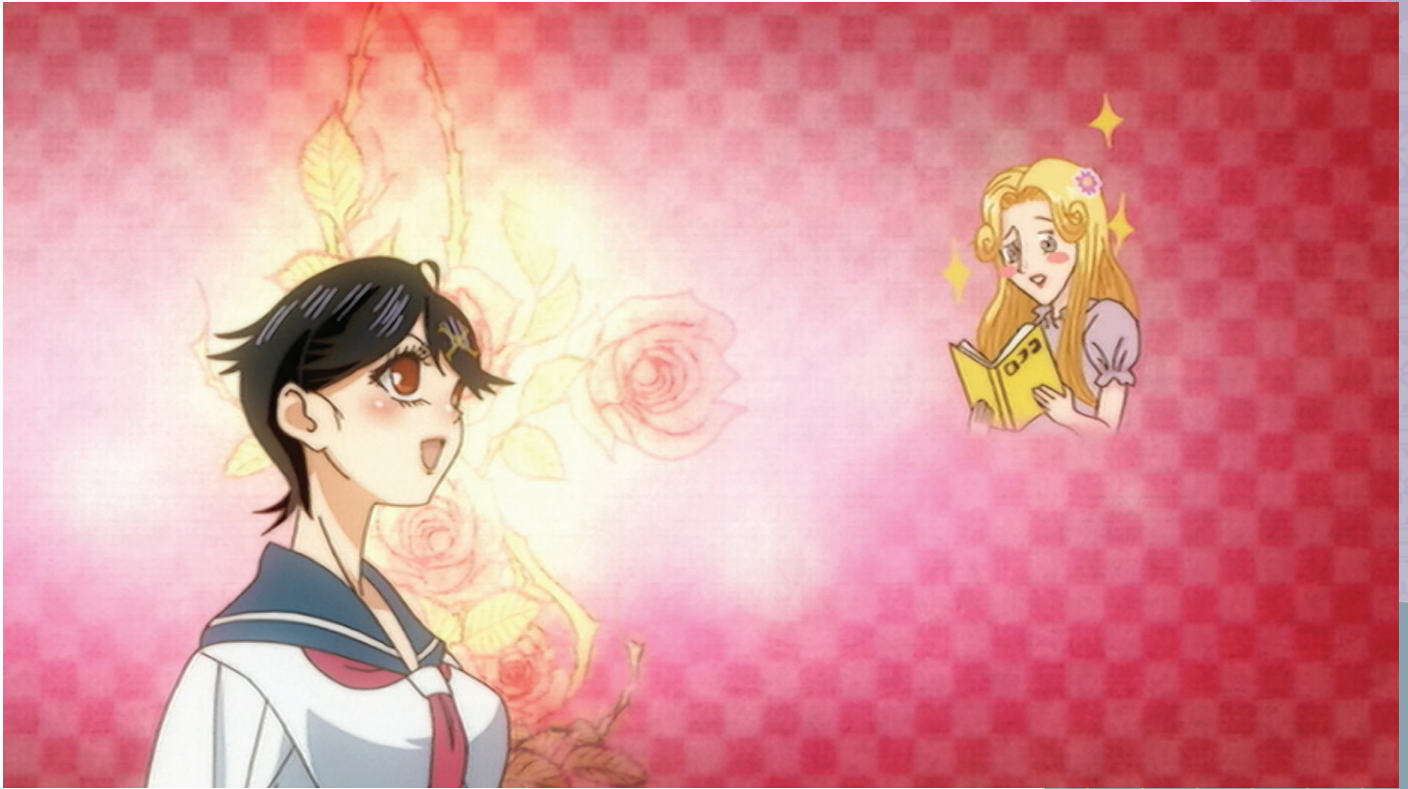
• **Ninth planet of the solar system → dwarf planet:** Pluto, once known as the ninth planet in our solar system, was discovered in 1930 by the American astronomer Clyde Tombaugh. However, in 2006, when the International Astronomical Union established an official definition of the term “planet”, Pluto did not fit the criteria. To officially be a planet, a body in space must meet three conditions: 1) It must orbit around the sun, 2) It must be rounded by its own gravity, and 3) it must be gravitationally dominant in its orbit - in other words, there can be nothing else of comparable size nearby that isn’t also within the body’s gravitational influence. Pluto does not meet the third condition, since it’s just one part of a large group of objects called the Kuiper belt. Pluto was thus demoted to the status of “dwarf planet”.

***“FOR INSTANCE, “METABOLIC SYNDROME”!  
THE NAME IS JUST TOO BEAUTIFUL!”***

Metabolic syndrome is a group of five conditions: high blood sugar, low HDL cholesterol, high triglycerides, large waist circumference, and high blood pressure. When a person has three or more of these risk factors, it can lead to health problems like diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

But it should be pretty clear that Kafuka is confusing the word “metabolic” with “melancholic”.

**"AND I BET ARISUGAWA ALICE IS A REFINED YOUNG LADY LIKE THIS!"**



Alice Arisugawa is actually a man. His real name is Masahide Uehara, and he's been writing mystery novels since 1989.

**"IF WE GO BY THEIR SOUND, I BET THEY'RE LIKE THIS!"**

Of course, Kafuka is entirely incorrect about each item in her list. Here's what they actually are:

- **Asbestos:** Asbestos is a fibrous mineral that's resistant to heat, electricity, and corrosion. Because it's such a good insulator, it was once commonly used for things like heat-resistant fabrics, textured paint, and attic and wall insulation. However, in the early 1900s, researchers began to notice links between exposure to asbestos and early deaths due to lung problems. It's now known that asbestos is linked to most mesotheliomas, and the material is banned in 66 countries and territories.

- **ED:** This is actually short for "erectile dysfunction". Would probably be a tough sell at the box office.

- **O-157:** No one wants to take a ride on O-157. It's a strain of the bacteria *E. coli* which can infect the intestines of cattle, goats, and sheep. If you eat meat infected with O-157, it can cause acute hemorrhagic diarrhea and abdominal cramps. For children and the elderly, it can even lead to kidney failure.

- **Kakumaru:** Kafuka thinks this sounds like "soy sauce made from round soybeans" because "kaku" can mean "kernel", and "maru" can mean "round". But Kakumaru is actually short for "Kakumeiteki Marukusu Shugiha" ("the Revolutionary Marxist Faction"), a Trotskyist revolutionary group. They were originally part of the Japanese Communist Party, but after a series of breakups and schisms, the Kakumaru was formed in 1959. Their goals were to overthrow the government and abolish the US-Japan Alliance.



## "MARIA THOUGHT THAT NIGHT PATROL TEACHER WAS DIRTY BOOK AT FIRST!"

Night Patrol Teacher is an autobiographical manga series from 2005. The author, Osamu Mizutani, wrote about his years as a night school teacher in Yokohama, where he helped teens who were dealing with tough issues like drug addiction, self-mutilation, and running away from home. So, it's not a book for young children - but it's not an "adult" book, either!

## ALL THE GIRL'S MONEY

This next episode preview is a parody of the novel Marital Relations, written by Sakunosuke Oda in 1940. The Japanese title of Oda's novel is "Meoto Zenzai", written 夫婦善哉, which literally means "the virtue of a married couple". But for this fake novel in the preview, the kanji have been changed to 女乙全財. These kanji don't form into a real word, but individually they could be pronounced "me oto zen zai", and if you took all their separate meanings and put them together, it would mean "all the young girl's money".

# EPISODE 3

## 100 REALLY SCARY TALES

"100 Tales" ("Hyakumonogatari") is an actual parlor game that was popular during the Edo period. At night, players would light 100 lanterns in a dark room and place them around a mirror. Then they would all leave and sit together in a separate room. To start, one player would tell a ghost story, or some similar grisly tale of the supernatural. Then, after the story was done, that person would cross over into the room with the lanterns, extinguish one, look into the mirror, and walk back to the room where everyone else was sitting. Each participant would do this one by one, and the room with the mirror would get darker and darker, making it a prime place for spirits to appear. Usually, the game would stop with one lantern remaining, in an effort to keep any ghosts from being summoned.

**"WE'VE ALREADY DONE THAT STORY."**



We're about to see Maeda-kun show up repeatedly and shoot down everyone's story suggestions. The idea of "What if an actual summer vacation friend came over?" really was done before, in chapter 111 of *Katte ni Kaizou*.

**"HOW ABOUT A BRAVERY TEST THAT'S ACTUALLY A GROSS-OUT TEST?"**

This was already done, too. It was in chapter 21 of the *Zetsubou-sensei* manga.

**HOW ABOUT A STORY ABOUT A GIRL WHO DOESN'T REALIZE SHE'S DEAD GOING ON A JOURNEY TO FIND HERSELF, AND INSTEAD SHE FINDS HER CORPSE?**

This was in *Katte ni Kaizou* chapter 157.

**"HOW ABOUT, INSTEAD OF THE SEVEN WONDERS, WE GO OVER THE SEVEN SCHOOL RULES?"**

This was in *Katte ni Kaizou* chapter 104.

**"LIKE A REMAKE OF EPISODE 1, FOR INSTANCE."**

And this was in *Katte ni Kaizou* chapter 281.



"THIS PARASITE-INFESTED WORLD HAS MADE ME LOSE ALL HOPE!"



And here's this episode's first big list! Nozomu laments over an abundance of parasites:

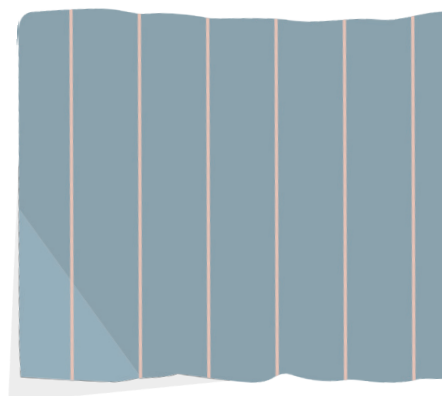
- **Companies in a neighboring country leeching off Japan's technology:**

This is a poke at the Korean company Samsung. When it comes to tech, Japan and Korea have been competitors for a long time, and the rivalry isn't always friendly. Most notably, in 2004, Samsung plasma TVs were banned in Japan for infringing on the patents of Japanese company Fujitsu.

- **A neighboring country's leading party leeching off Japanese aid:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, the Japanese government program Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided 3.6 trillion yen in aid to China in the form of loans and grants.

- **Bureaus and agencies leeching off broadcast rights:** There is a lot of money to be made by holding the broadcast rights to various forms of entertainment. Advertising agencies like Dentsu and Hakuhodo, talent agencies like Johnny & Associates and Yoshimoto Kogyo, and TV stations all across the country don't necessarily make the content they provide, but they certainly control where and when it can be seen.

- **Talentless celebrities leeching off a master:** Perhaps the most visible example of this is the Takeshi Corps, a group of comedians who consider themselves disciples of the legendary comedian Beat Takeshi. They formed a group with Takeshi's blessing; at one point, they even had their own show called Takeshi Corps! Hit & Beat. And yet, some people still considered them to be nothing more than pale shadows of the original.



• **Host club owners leeching off strippers:** Prostitutes who are in a precarious financial situation and can't find other lines of work are prime targets to be hired on as cabaret girls.

• **Employment agencies leeching off workers:** In 1999, the laws surrounding employment agencies were overhauled. Previously, the maximum amount that agencies could charge a company after a successful match was 10.1% of the employee's six-month salary. But under the new law, agencies could charge up to 50% of the employee's annual salary. Before the law changed, there were around 300 employment agencies in Japan; as of this writing, there are more than 20,000.

• **The Chairman leeching off the soccer world:** "The Chairman" is the title given to the director of the J League, Japan's men's association soccer league. The Chairman is meant to oversee and manage the league's business operations, but like anyone in a position of power, there will always be questions about how much work they're actually accomplishing.

• **Manhwa leeching off the Paris Japan Expo:** The Japan Expo is a convention held in France that celebrates Japanese pop culture. It first began in 1999 with 2,400 attendees, and has since grown exponentially, with more than 200,000 attendees per year. But in 2006, there was a bit of a kerfuffle when a company that publishes Korean manga (called "manhwa") became a sponsor for the event, and there ended up being more Korean artists invited as guests than Japanese artists.

• **Environmental groups leeching off whales:** When the environmental group Greenpeace first tried to stop Japanese fishermen from hunting whales, they did so by protesting, causing civil disruption, and chasing down whaling ships. Not only did this earn them negative press in Japan, it also did nothing to stop the whaling. The public at large just took it as Greenpeace trying to meddle in Japanese culture.

## "UNDER CRIMINAL CODE ARTICLE 39..."

Article 39 of the Japanese criminal code states that "Actions due to insanity are not subject to punishment," and "Actions done by those with diminished capacity will have reduced punishment." What exactly are you planning, Ikkyu?

## "AH, THAT WAS A THING. IT'S A BIT DATED, THOUGH."

Months before each Olympic competition, the Olympic torch is lit in Greece and carried by relay runners to wherever the games are being held. It's meant to be a symbol of the continuity of the Olympic Games, so ideally, the flame should never go out.

However, as the flame was on its way to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, there were several large protests along the way due to China's human rights record and their treatment of Tibet. In Paris, there was so much chaos that security officials extinguished the torch themselves several times for safety reasons, as the torch bearers ran through fist-fights, angry mobs, and tear gas.



## **"YOU SAY THAT IT'S DATED, BUT WE RAN A STORY ABOUT IT JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO..."**

This current OVA story is based off of Zetsubou-sensei manga chapter 149. But in chapter 136, which ran just a few months earlier, Maria accidentally spills a drink on the Olympic torchbearer and puts out the flame.

## **"DO YOU REALLY THINK I'LL LET YOU STOP SHORT AT 99?"**

When Chiri says this, there's a yellow face in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen. This is Sanosuke, a big puffy yellow doll that Ryouko Shintani received as a "desperate birthday present" on episode 31 of Sayonara Zetsubou Housou. In episode 22, Ryouko Shintani said that she wanted a body pillow of Sanosuke Sagara from Rurouni Kenshin... but that's not what she got. The fluffy yellow impersonator had a scribbled-on face and the literal word "SANOSUKE" scrawled down its stomach. It was so ridiculous that it became the show's unofficial mascot.

## **"THIS IS DOUBLE ISSUE, SO IT COVERS TWO WEEKS' WORTH!"**

Chapter 149, which this story was based on, ran in the August 6th, 2008 edition of Weekly Shounen Magazine. But that particular magazine was a double-issue, since Weekly Shounen Magazine wasn't going to run the week of August 13th. So this story had to tide everyone over until August 20th!

## **"SOMETIMES I READ KAMI J-KUN'S BLOG."**

"Kami J-kun" is meant to be Yuusuke Kamiji, a Japanese actor and singer who ran a blog in the 2000's. His site was so popular that in 2008, he was certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as having "The Most Visited Personal Blog in 24 Hours", for having 230,755 unique visitors in a single day.

## **LONG TELEPHOTO LENSES. VERTICAL SCENE CHANGES. MESH PATTERNS.**

This Lupin-style text is a list of animation techniques that SHAFT commonly uses in their shows.

## **DIALOGUE IN THE DARKNESS**

This episode title is a spoof on Dialogue with the Deities, a book written by Ryuunosuke Akutagawa in 1917.

## **WHITE DAY FAIR**

The bespectacled man with the winning smile is supposed to be Bae Yong-joon, star of the South Korean TV drama Winter Sonata. His wild popularity in Japan has been mentioned in previous liner notes.



## **SUNDAY X MAGAZINE. AKAMATSU X KUMETA. HATA X KUMETA.**

The upcoming episode is all about “battles without winners”, so this Lupin-style text is giving us some warm-up examples.

### **THE LOSER BOOK**

This episode title is a play on The Pillow Book, a famous collection of essays and poems written in 1002 by a court lady named Sei Shounagon.

### **TERROR CHOCOLATE**



In Japanese, this hopefully harmless chocolate is labeled Teroru (テロル), which means “terrorism”. But if you were to tweak that first letter a tiny bit, you’d get Tirol (チロル), which is the name of an actual line of chocolates in Japan. Tirol chocolates are sold in small, individually wrapped squares for a cheap price, which makes them popular with kids who only have a few coins to spend.

### **“I HAVE TO REPAY HER FOR VALENTINE’S DAY!”**

This would-be suitor does literally say the words “Valentine’s Day” out loud, but in the text version that appears, the term has been shortened to “VD”. Unfortunately for him, that’s the commonly used acronym for “venereal disease”.

### **MITTAN CURRY NOW AVAILABLE**

The Yuasa Soy Sauce Company in Wakayama Prefecture has a well-known mascot named Mittan. She’s a cute little girl with orange/blonde hair and a bow that looks like two leaves - essentially, she resembles a mandarin orange. This might seem odd for a soy sauce company, but Yuasa actually makes several different products, including orange gelatin sweets.

In the fall of 2008, Yuasa released a new product: a brand of pre-packaged curry called “Maid



Curry". It featured another cute girl on the front, Waka-chan (named after their location, Wakayama), who was dressed in a maid outfit and holding out a plate of curry.

"Mittan Curry", then, is just these two things mixed together.

## ***I THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED THIS ON NYONTAKA NET***

"Nyontaka Net" was the name of a popular Zetsubou-sensei fan website run by a user named herolynQ. It used to be an enormous repository of knowledge about Kouji Kumeta and all of his works, but the site shut down in 2012.

## ***"IT'S AN ARGUMENT OVER WHOSE COUPLE IS THE OTP."***

For those unfamiliar with the acronym, OTP stands for "One True Pairing". It's what fans use to describe their favorite fictional couples - characters who they believe go perfectly together.

## ***RESTAURANT SAIZERIYA***

You might remember from previous liner notes that Saizeriya is an actual restaurant chain in Japan. The real restaurant's name is spelled all in katakana (サイゼリヤ), but here in Zetsubou-sensei, the katakana has been changed to hiragana, and the "ya" has been swapped out with the kanji for "store", which is also pronounced "ya": さいぜり屋.

## ***RADIO REFERENCES***



On the wall inside the Saizeriya, there are two things hanging on the wall: a paper with some text written on it, and a picture of a yellow face. Both of these are references to the radio show Sayonara Zetsubou Housou.

The text on the paper says: "The mass media is scary," which is supposed to be a message from Nozomu's voice actor, Hiroshi Kamiya. If you recall from a previous liner note, pinup model Akina Minami appeared at a promotional event for the second season of Mobile Suit Gundam 00, and while she was up on stage, Hiroshi Kamiya (jokingly) asked her out, and she instantly refused.

Kamiya was then roasted about it in interviews and articles for a while. On episode 59 of Sayonara Zetsubou Housou, he told listeners, “Be careful of the media!” This text on the wall is just an extension of that warning.

As for the picture, that’s Sanosuke, Ryouko Shintani’s goofy yellow doll and the unofficial mascot for Sayonara Zetsubou Housou.

## ***“IF YOU COULD GO OUT WITH AKKINA, WHERE WOULD YOU GO ON YOUR FIRST DATE?”***

“Akkina” is a nickname for Akina Minami, a pinup idol who also dabbles in movies and TV shows. If you remember from previous liner notes, Hiroshi Kamiya awkwardly asked her out at a Gundam 00 stage show, and she flatly refused.

## ***WHAT’S ON THE MENU***

As Matoi laments over “battles without victors”, a restaurant menu opens to reveal a list of examples:

- **Will your startup be IT or temp agency?:** IT company Livedoor started out small and became an enormous success, but its founder, Takafumi Horie, ended up getting arrested for securities fraud. Similarly, the staffing company Recruit Holdings started out as a small advertising firm and grew into a huge staffing agency. But executives sold large amounts of stock to politicians below market price, in return for political favors. When this came to light, the Prime Minister’s entire cabinet was forced to resign.
- **How much could you sell a modern cell phone for in America 10 years ago?:** Before the advent of the smartphone in the late 2000s, Japanese cell phone technology was far beyond what was available in America. They had built-in cameras, they could access the Internet, and they could even play music and video games. But asking how much one would go for in America circa 1997 is moot, since you can’t go back and sell one.
- **If you won the lottery, would you use it or invest it?:** It doesn’t matter how you answer the question; the vast majority of people will never win the lottery.
- **Let’s do a third season! A full remake, starting with episode 1 (Negima)!:** Ken Akamatsu’s Negima! manga was very successful, but each of its anime adaptations was troubled in one way or another. The first season of Negima! TV anime was made by XEBEC in 2005, but it only covered the first couple of manga volumes, and the animation was rather poor. The second season of Negima! was animated by SHAFT in 2006, and directed by the same man who directed Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei: Akiyuki Shinbo. This time around the animation was significantly better, but the story and tone went off in a completely different direction from the manga, so fans who wanted a faithful adaptation were still left unsatisfied. The suggestion here to do “a full remake, starting with episode 1” is a nice pipe dream, but no studio would spend the money to redo what had been made just a couple years ago. (Though perhaps now, almost twenty years later, a remake would make more sense!)
- **If you sell out to a pachinko maker, you can get a movie deal:** This is referring to anime company Satelight, which became a subsidiary of pachinko machine maker Sankyo Group in 2006. The first fruit of this deal was Genesis of Aquarion, which started out as a late-night TV anime, then was eventually made into OVA and movie versions. Satelight produced all the anime, while Sankyo made pachinko machines and a bunch of questionable commercials featuring



real women talking about “wanting to unite with you” while standing in front of giant CG robots.

- **Maybe I should quit my job. But if I quit, there’s nothing else out there!:** This episode was made in 2008, when Japan (and the rest of the world) was going through the Great Recession. Even though Japan wasn’t too affected by the subprime mortgage crisis that rocked the US, spending declines in other countries meant that sales were down on Japan’s exports, which were mostly luxury items like cars and electrical appliances. This meant less money for companies, which meant hiring freezes in several industries.

- **Economic stimulus handout (hah!):** In 2008, the Japanese government issued several stimulus packages to help shore up the Japanese economy during the recession. They included things like expanded credits for small businesses, and cash payouts to individual households. Though from the sound of it, the cash payouts weren’t too substantial.

- **Sun? Moon? Star? I’ll buy them all!:** THE iDOLM@STER SP is the Play-Station Portable entry in the popular idol-raising game franchise. Similar to Pokémon games, THE iDOLM@STER SP had three different versions: Perfect Sun, Missing Moon, and Wandering Star. Each version had different idols to “collect” and train.

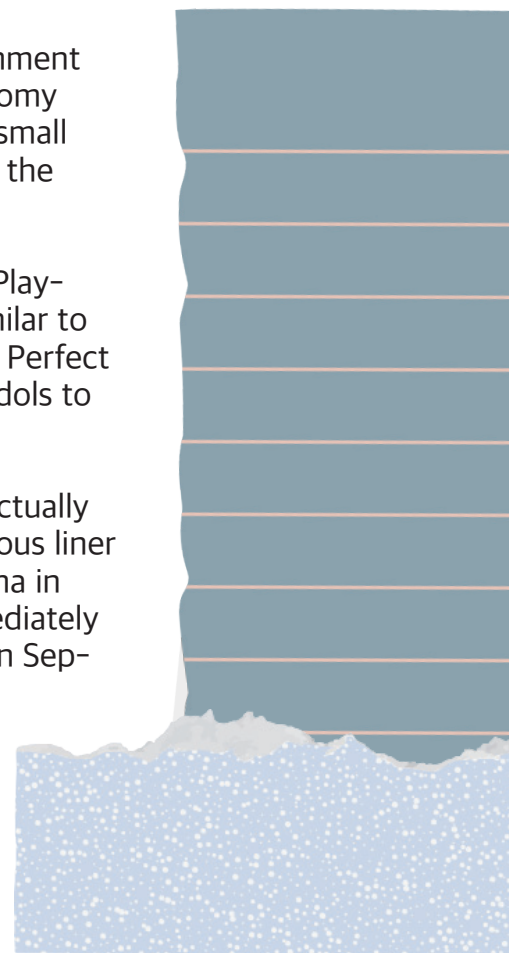
- **Pizza not currently sold:** This is the only part of the menu that’s actually written like a menu. It’s referring to an incident mentioned in a previous liner note, when melamine was found in a pizza dough shipment from China in October 2008. The dough had gone to Saizeriya, and Saizeriya immediately offered refunds for all customers who purchased their pizzas between September 25th and October 2nd, whether they had a receipt or not.

***“TRUE, THERE ARE MANY CASES WHERE BATTLES WAGED ON THE BLEEDING EDGE HAVE NO WINNERS.”***

Nozomu shows us examples of wars where neither side will win:

- **Graphics war between the PS3 & Xbox. Who won...?:** In the mid-to-late-2000s, Sony’s PlayStation 3 and Microsoft’s Xbox 360 were locked in a bitter console war. Each company spent vast amounts of money to try and outperform the other in high functionality and performance. But in the end, they were both handily outsold by Nintendo’s Wii and DS systems, which focused on new ways to play games rather than high-end graphics.

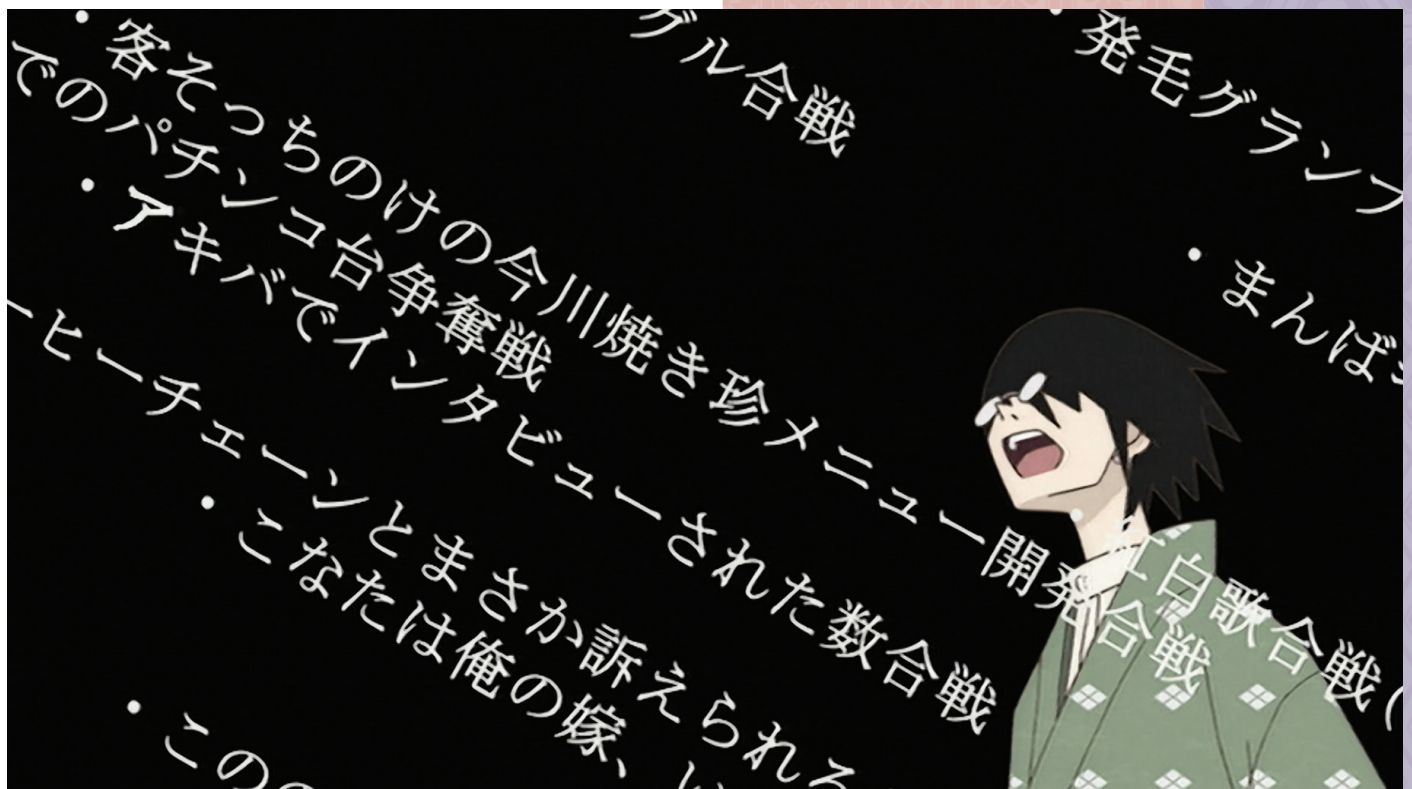
- **The race to add more functions to cell phones. They aren’t sold abroad:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, prior to the advent of smartphones, Japanese cell phones were technologically superior to almost anything you could find overseas. There were eight major cellphone makers, and between 1999 and 2005, their competition with each other brought about features like e-mail, camera phones, full music downloads, electronic payments, even digital TV. However, all of these advances were made without any thought to the international market. They created services that other countries couldn’t support, like the web service i-mode. They adopted the 3G standard in 2001, long before most of the world. Thus, Japanese cell phones weren’t sold abroad, and the market had no way to grow. When smartphones appeared a few years later, that was the beginning of the end for the industry as it was.



- **The race to develop low-malt beers. The resulting tax hike...**: Japan's alcohol tax system divides malt beverages into different categories based on their percentage of malt. Any malt beverage with 67% or higher malt content is considered a beer, and is taxed at the highest rate. So, in an effort to dodge the higher tax, companies began to develop lower-malt beers called happoushu. They were almost the same as regular beer, and since they weren't taxed as much, they were cheaper! Happoushu's popularity rose, which meant the tax revenues from beer fell, so eventually the government just altered the tax code so that any malt beverage with 50% or higher malt content (which included most happoushu) was also taxed at the highest rate.

- **The fates of people who saved for retirement and those who received retirement benefits**: "Retirement benefits" in this instance is "taishokukin", which is a lump sum of money given to an employee when they retire. There is no legal standard amount for taishokukin; it varies from company to company, and if you have to retire early for whatever reason, your employer can decide how much of the money you actually "deserve" to receive. So in this case, "both sides are losers" because the person paying into the pension system won't get much, and the person getting a lump sum when they retire won't get much, either.

**"BATTLES WHERE BOTH PARTIES LOSE HAVE MADE ME LOSE ALL HOPE!"**



Yet another list of hopeless hostilities goes flying across the screen!

- **The finalists in the Hair Growth Grand Prix**: Since 2001, the Japanese hair restoration company Reve 21 has held an annual Number One Hair Growth in Japan Contest. Participants submit before-and-after pictures of their hair loss and how much has grown back, and then celebrities judge the pictures in front of a live audience.

- **Both sides of a groping trial where the defendant is acquitted**: No one's a winner in this scenario. The plaintiff was probably still groped by someone, and even though the defendant



was found innocent, the public at large will probably still consider him guilty.

• **A makeup battle between Manba Gals:** “Manba Gals” are an offshoot of the Ganguro fashion trend that was popular in the mid-1990s. While the Ganguro style centered on tan skin and bright makeup, Manba Gals pushed this even further. Women who wanted the Manba look had to get incredibly dark skin either through tanning beds or makeup, paint thick bright white makeup around their eyes, lips and nose, and dye their hair into neon colors while adding in extensions and dreadlocks.

• **Paparazzi fighting for the low-angle camera shot:** Low-angle camera shots produce dynamic, visually appealing pictures. And since the industry basically revolves around legions of photographers all trying to capture the most sellable picture of a celebrity going through some kind of private, vulnerable moment, you can bet there’s going to be a battle over who can take the most interesting shot.

• **The Olympic bidding war between Fukuoka and Tokyo:** In 2006, there were two Japanese cities vying for the right to host the 2016 Summer Olympics: Tokyo, the nation’s capital, and Fukuoka, a large city down to the south. Tokyo considered themselves the obvious choice, calling Fukuoka’s bid an “unrealistic dream”. Fukuoka, meanwhile, argued that too much power and authority was concentrated in Tokyo, and it was stifling national development. But in the end, none of it mattered. The 2008 Olympics had just been held in China, so there wasn’t much chance that another Asian country would host again so soon. The 2016 Summer Olympics ended up being held in Rio de Janeiro.

• **In the battle to be the world’s key currency, the dollar and the yen both lose:** In the world of global finance, a “key currency” is a stable currency that serves as the foundation for international exchange rates. Its stability also makes it a good investment, so central banks around the world will often hold quantities of key currencies in reserve to sustain their investments and conduct international trade. The US dollar has been the leading international key currency since the end of World War II, but in 2002, when all the financial scandals at huge companies like Enron and WorldCom were exposed, the dollar started to lose stability. The yen

was also suffering around this time, but for a different reason: the value of the yen was rising so quickly against the dollar that it was hurting Japan’s biggest moneymaker, exports. The yen was becoming so “expensive”, so to speak, that it was cheaper for Japanese companies to do their manufacturing overseas, but that took jobs and cash flow out of the domestic economy. As the dollar and the yen struggled, rising in their places was the Euro, the official currency of the European Union. The Euro kept gaining in value until the Great Recession of 2008, and has since become the world’s second most significant currency. (However, as of this writing, the US dollar still remains the global leader by a large margin.)

• **Kohaku Gassen (In terms of viewership, both teams lose):** Mentioned in previous liner notes, Kohaku Uta Gassen is NHK’s annual New Year’s Eve song battle show. Popular musical artists are split up into red and white teams, they perform from a selection of songs, and then the audience votes to decide which team wins. Back in the 1960s, Kohaku Uta Gassen was the most-watched television program in Japan. However, viewership has been steadily falling for years. 2021’s Kohaku Uta Gassen had an average audience rating of 34.3%, the lowest in the show’s history.

• **The competition to make unusual imagawayaki items that get ignored by customers:** “Shops coming up with unique menu items, whether they taste good or not” is a recurring joke in Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei. The idea is that no matter which store “wins”, the customer loses. As for

imagawayaki, it's a type of sweet dessert, sort of like an extra-thick pancake with a filling in the center. Traditionally, they're filled with sweet bean paste or vanilla custard, but modern-day imagawayaki shops will fill them with all sorts of things, like jams, curries, vegetables, and more.

- **Customers lining up early in the morning to compete over pachinko machines:** If a pachinko parlor has to temporarily close for whatever reason, on the day it reopens, the parlor owner will usually tweak the machines to give slightly better payouts, as a way of thanking patrons for their patience. This tends to draw in huge amounts of customers, all itching to take advantage of the opportunity. In this particular example, they're lining up in the morning, even though most pachinko parlors don't open until the afternoon. To the players, it might seem important to grab a spot at a machine before they all fill up. But remember, pachinko is gambling... and the house always wins.

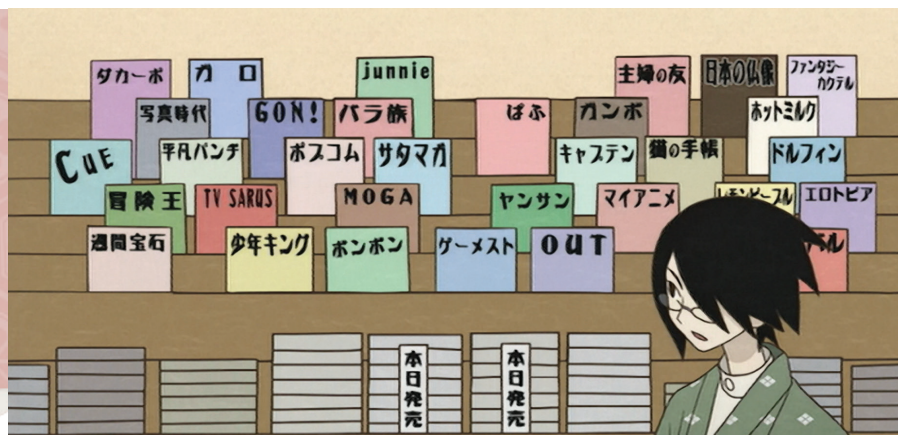
- **Competing to get interviewed the most in Akiba:** When TV personalities want to do a “man-on-the-street” type of interview, they often go to Akihabara. But, generally speaking, they’re there because random otaku are an easy target for ridicule. Trying hard to get your 15 minutes of fame through TV interviews like these is a losing proposition.

- **The divorce terms that Takeuchi Yuuko forced on Shidou Nakamura (he can't discuss their married life):** Nakamura Shidou is a famous kabuki actor, Yuuko Takeuchi was a famous actress, and the two of them both costarred in the highly successful romance film *Be With You* in 2004. After filming was complete, the two of them got married and had a son, but their relationship didn't last long; a year later, Shidou was caught cheating and the two went through a messy separation. Strangely, as part of the terms of divorce, Shidou was forbidden from discussing what his life was like with Yuuko while they were married. Whatever the intention of that stipulation might have been, it only led to speculation that Yuuko was a terrible wife.

- **The coffee chain that sued for coming in last, and the magazine that never expected to get sued:** In October 2007, the magazine *The Weekend for Adults* secretly visited 11 different coffee shops and graded them on their drinks, food, convenience, and atmosphere. Coming in last place at number 11 was a chain called Caffe Veloce, with the magazine reviewer saying, “It was sheer luck whether the coffee was any good.” Caffe Veloce turned around and filed a lawsuit against *The Weekend for Adults*, claiming that the review hurt its brand image. They wanted \$100,000 in damages and a public apology.

- **“Konata is my waifu!” “No, she’s my waifu!” Both are losers:** “Konata” here is Konata Izumi, the leader of the crew in Lucky Star.

"OH, AND RIVAL MAGAZINES THAT GO ON SALE THE SAME DAY."





Weekly Shounen Magazine and Weekly Shounen Sunday both release on Wednesdays. And they're both well below the circulation numbers for Weekly Shounen Jump.

On a side note, all the magazines on the rack behind Nozomu are real-life magazines that have been discontinued. Starting from the top left, there's:

- Da Capo (ran from 1981 to 2007)
- Garo (ran from 1964 to 2002)
- Junie (ran from 1986 to 2005)
- Shufu no Tomo ("The Housewife's Companion", ran from 1917 to 2008)
- Nihon no Butsuzou ("Japanese Buddha Statues", ran from 2007 to 2008)
- Fantasy Cocktail (ran from 1993 to 2004)
- Shashin Jidai ("The Age of Photography", ran from 1981 to 1988)
- GON! (ran from 1995 to 2001)
- Barazoku ("The Rose Tribe", ran from 1971 to 2008)
- Puff (ran from 1974 to 1981)
- Comic Gumbo (ran from January 2007 to December 2007)
- Manga Hot Milk (ran from 1986 to 2001)
- Cue (ran from 1932 to 1980)
- Heibon Punch ("Regular Punch", ran from 1964 to 1988)
- Popcom (ran from 1983 to 1994)
- SataMaga ("Saturn Magazine", ran from 1995 to 1998)
- Monthly Shounen Captain (ran from 1985 to 1997)
- Neko no Techou ("The Cat Notebook", ran from 1987 to 2008)
- Comic Dolphin (ran from 1992 to 2007)
- Bouken Ou ("King of Adventure", ran from 1949 to 1983)
- TV Zaurus (ran from 1989 to 1998)
- MOGA (ran from May 1986 to November 1986)
- Weekly Young Sunday (ran from 1987 to 2008)
- My Anime (ran from 1981 to 1986)
- Lemon People (ran from 1982 to 1998)
- Manga Erotopia (ran from 1973 to 2000)
- Weekly Gem (ran from 1981 to 2001)
- Shounen King (ran from 1963 to 1982)
- Comic BomBom (ran from 1981 to 2007)
- Gamest (ran from 1986 to 1999)
- Monthly OUT (ran from 1977 to 1995)

## ***WE'RE WINNERS! THE JAPAN MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL RECOMMENDS THIS WORK!***


The Japan Media Arts Festival is an annual festival held by the Agency for Cultural Affairs that awards prizes to outstanding works in four categories: art, entertainment, animation, and manga. In 2008, Sayonara, Zetsubou-sensei didn't win the grand prize for Animation (that went to a short film called The House of Small Cubes), but it was listed among the judges' picks for "Recommended Works".

## ***"IT'S A HUGE VICTORY FOR BOTH SIDES!"***

There's something slightly off about Kafuka's list of victories. Her examples include:

• **Car reviewers & car makers:** In the past, it was a fairly open secret that car makers gave all sorts of gifts and favors to people who wrote about cars, in order to get favorable reviews for their vehicles. This was brought into sharp focus when automobile journalist Hiroyoshi Sugie wrote a book in 1976 called Choosing a Car Full of Mistakes. It was full of his unfiltered opinions about cars at the time, but he wrote it under the pen name Aritsune Tokudaiji. There was

such a backlash in the automobile industry over it that they launched an investigation into who actually wrote the book, traced the writing style back to Sugie, and had him expelled from the Japan Automotive Journalists Association.



• **Diet members & press clubs:** In this case, the “press club” being referred to is a kisha club, an association of reporters who have exclusive access to speak to government ministries, local authorities, and other similar people in power. This sort of arrangement exists in many countries, but the Japanese version is rather extreme. Smaller news organizations, freelance journalists, and foreign journalists are often blocked from kisha clubs, which leads to opacity and potential corruption. There have even been cases where members of kisha clubs were penalized for reporting information that challenged the government’s official narrative. In 2009, reporters from the Tokyo Shimbun were banned from talking with prosecutors for three weeks after naming a Liberal Democratic Party politician in their coverage of a funding scandal, when the prosecutors had been focusing their investigation on opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa. Journalism professor Yasuhiko Tajima spoke on it, saying, “The news media should be watchdogs on authority. But they act more like authority’s guard dogs.”

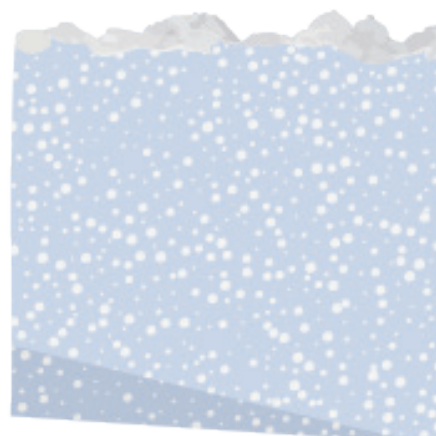
• **Family squabbles between Sakura and Sakura-Papa:** “Sakura” is Sakura Yokomine, a professional golfer who’s been mentioned in previous liner notes. She started her career at a young age, and for a while, her father, politician Yoshiro Yokomine, was her caddy. It wasn’t always sunshine and roses; the two sometimes got into father-daughter arguments on the golf course. But for whatever reason, that only served to increase their popularity.

• **Mitchi & Satchi:** In 1999, actress Mitsuyo Asaka and TV personality Sachiyo Nomura got into a legendary spat that lasted most of the year. It all started when Mitsuyo was a guest on the radio show “Yuri Osawa’s YuuYu Wide”. They were discussing how Sachiyo was a candidate in the Tokyo gubernatorial election, and she might win. Mitsuyo was disgusted, and answered far more strongly than anyone expected, saying things like, “She’s worse than a bully. She tells everyone they’re idiots,” and, “That woman is awful. I just want to slap her!” Of course Sachiyo, who was well known for her aggressive, outspoken personality, wasted no time jumping into the fight. On her next talk show appearance, she disparaged Mitsuyo right back. The two continued on like this

for months, and the media covered it all. What made it all the more strange is that both women were in their late 60s/early 70s - far old enough to know better. Japanese politician Makiko Tanaka described the quarrel as “dinosaur vs. dinosaur”.

• **Fukuda & China:** Yasuo Fukuda was elected as the Prime Minister of Japan in September 2007. At that time, Japan and China were deep in talks over contested territory in the East China Sea. Chinese oil companies had started offshore drilling just 5km away from Japan’s side of the currently-accepted border, and Japanese officials were concerned that China was tapping into Japan’s resources. As a way of placating China and hopefully greasing the diplomatic wheels, Fukuda opposed a plan that Taiwan had put forth to hold a referendum on UN membership. “If it leads to a unilateral change of the (political) status quo (between China and Taiwan), we cannot support it,” he said. By June 2008, both Japan and China agreed to jointly develop the gas fields in the East China Sea.

• **Health Ministry (schmoozing) & Big Pharma (approval of dangerous substances):** In 1983, an American company called Baxter Travenol Laboratories approached the Japanese Ministry of Health





and Welfare to let them know that they were manufacturing a new blood product for hemophiliacs. It was heat-treated to kill the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which caused AIDS. However, the Japanese company Green Cross Corporation, Japan's main provider of blood products, protested to the Ministry that this was unfair competition, since they didn't have the capability to make heat-treated agents themselves. The Ministry sided with Green Cross, and the end result was that more than 1,800 hemophiliacs contracted HIV throughout the 1980s, and more than 400 of them died.

• **Public Highway Corporation (prospering after a disaster) & Koizumi Revolution (big election win):** In the run-up to his election, former Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi made many proposals for reform. One such suggestion was to privatize the Public Highway Corporation, the government body in charge of the nation's expressways, with the goal of eliminating its massive debt. This aggressive, "fix it or get out" attitude led to a landslide election victory for Koizumi. In 2005, the Public Highway Corporation was indeed split into three different private companies. But... if you're wondering what "prospering after a disaster" means, the Japanese term being used here is "yakebutori". It's an old word which means "a merchant who profits off the misfortunes of others". So, even though the Highway Corporation was privatized, the shares didn't go to citizen shareholders; they're still 100% owned by the government. Plus, all the old corruptions remain: cushy upper management positions being filled by retiring politicians, infrastructure-specific financial resources being routed away, etc. So it's difficult to say if anything about the new situation is any better than the old one.

• **Police (golden parachutes) & pachinko industry (overlooking money changing):** One common form of corruption in Japan is bureaucrats getting lucrative corporate jobs after they retire. This affects the police force as well; many retiring police officers actually end up in associations related to the pachinko industry. This helps to ensure that pachinko remains legal, even though most other forms of gambling are forbidden. Pachinko's loophole, which everyone knows about but no one acknowledges, is that players are rewarded with non-cash prizes like stuffed animals or tokens, which the player can then exchange for cash at a nearby vendor outside the parlor.

• **TV stations (getting sponsors) & cult groups (ignoring illegality):** The "cult" being referred to here is Soka Gakkai, a large religious group based on Nichiren Buddhism. In 2008, the group's educational establishment, Soka University, sponsored a Fuji TV news and sports program and ran commercials during the show. The problem was, Soka Gakkai also has their own political party called the Clean Government Party. Media Professor Takaaki Hattori with Rikkyo University commented on the incident, saying, "While TV stations are currently suffering from decline in advertising revenue, they should remember they are news organizations and be careful about accepting sponsorships from political parties. Otherwise, their stance toward politics will be called into question by viewers."

• **Making idols portable:** For the first few years after the launch of the popular idol game The iDOLM@STER, it could only be played in arcades or in the deep, dark recesses of one's home. But in early 2009, with the release of THE iDOLM@STER SP for the PlayStation Portable, otaku and their virtual girlfriends could now go anywhere and everywhere.

• **OAD popularity & economic activity (public opinion):** The OAD format was still fairly new when this episode released in 2008. It proved to be very popular, leading to a rise in sales. So, the (joking) claim here is that increased spending on OADs led people to believe that the economy was doing well, even though the world was currently in the grip of the Great Recession.

• **Ep. 2 screened on 1/11. Ep. 3 not done. / May this year be a good one! 1/12, 4:18 AM:** These last two bulletpoints are messages from the staff at SHAFT. Happy New Year's! Now stop writing messages at 4:18AM and get some sleep!

## HEATED DEBATE! DO UFOS EXIST?!



This televised debate between Nozomu and Kafuka is loosely based on a similar TV battle between UFO researcher Jun'ichiro Nirasawa and physicist Yoshihiko Ootsuki. The two met on Beat Takeshi's debate show TV Tackle and argued over the existence of aliens. Nirasawa was in the "yea" camp, Ootsuki was in the "nay" camp, and of course, nothing was definitively proven one way or the other.

### RED FIRE

Right before these words appear on the screen, there's a short scene where Maria mentions to Kouji Kumeta, "You lose to both of them, huh?" and he responds, "When you say 'both of them,' who are you referring to?"

"Red Fire" is the answer to this question. It's a combination of the names of Ken Akamatsu (the kanji for "aka" means "red") and Kejiro Hata (the kanji for "hata" is a combination of the radicals for "fire" and "field"). Put these two pieces together, and you get "Red Fire". (As a reminder, Ken Akamatsu is the author of *Negima!* Magister Negi Magi, and Kenjiro Hata is Kouji Kumeta's former assistant who created Hayate the Combat Butler.)

### YOU DON'T HAVE TO WRITE THE SCRIPT, KUMETA-SENSEI. JUST DRAW THE MANGA.

This Lupin text is referring to the fact that this part of the episode is an anime original. However, it was still written entirely by Kouji Kumeta!

### TALL TALES FROM JAPAN

This episode title is a play on the 1976 anime series *Nippon Mukashibanashi* ("Folk Tales From Japan"). The word "Nippon" ("Japan") has been changed here to "ippon", meaning "a single tree", as in the tree that all the Negati Club members are hanging from.



## "IS IT SOMETHING LIKE KABADDI?"

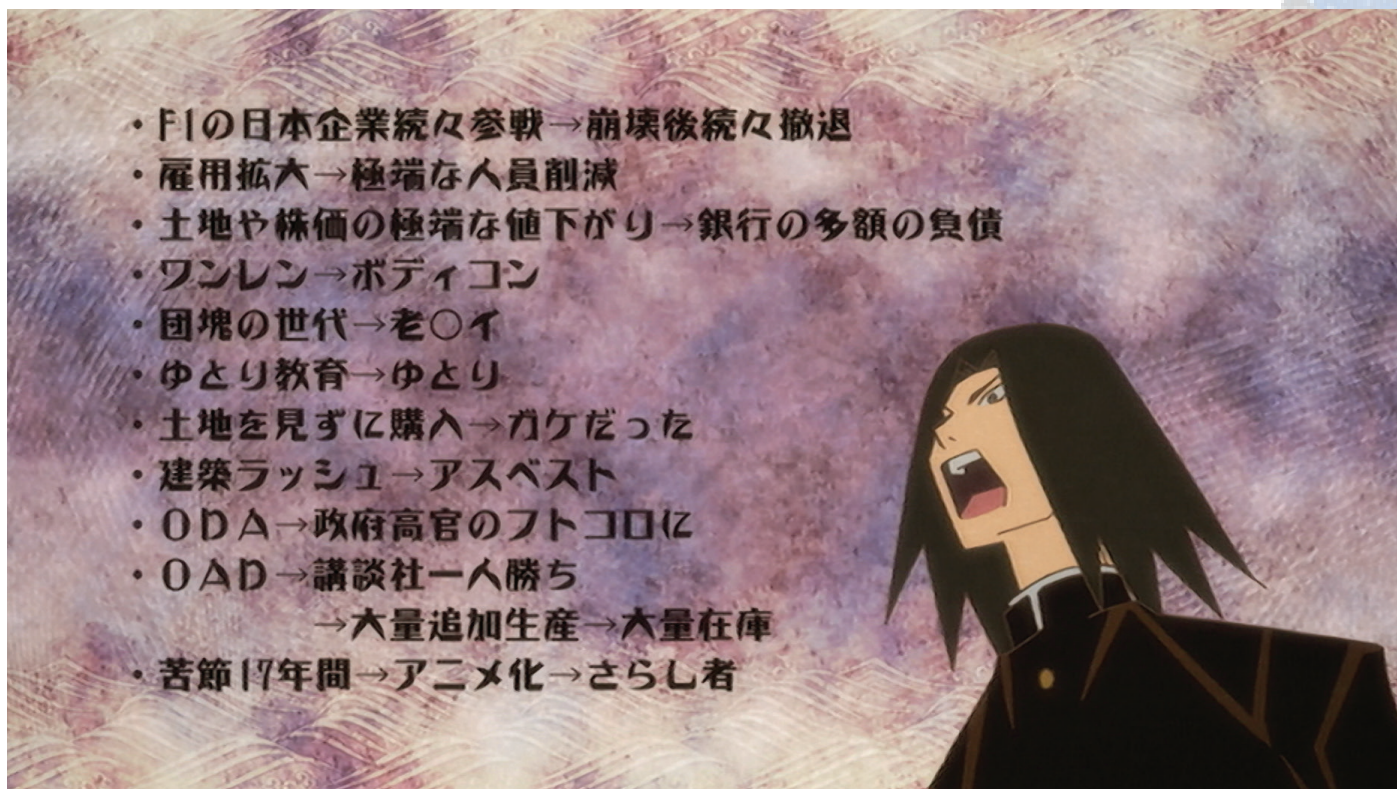
Kabaddi is a contact sport that's popular in India. There's no ball involved; instead two teams of seven players face off to see which team's "raider" is the best at running into the other team's territory and touching as many opponents as possible without getting tackled. Nozomu's vision of two men facing off is something you might easily see in kabaddi as one player tries to tag another.

## "THEY'RE BASED ON THE KINKOJI, SON GOKU'S GOLDEN HEADBAND."

In the classic Chinese novel Journey to the West, the Buddhist monk Genjo Sanzo put a magical golden headband on the monkey king, Son Goku. Son Goku was wild and difficult to control, so whenever he acted out, Sanzo chanted a certain sutra and the golden headband tightened, giving Son Goku a terrible headache. This headband was called the "kinkoji".

Nozomu's new glasses, meanwhile, are called "kinpoji". This is a made-up word that mashes together "kinshi" ("forbidden") and "pojitibu" ("positivity").

## "ALL OF THESE ARE THE RESULT OF AGGRESSIVELY POSITIVE THINKING!"



Nozomu wants to have a positive outlook on his life as a student, but the members of the Negati Club want to convince him otherwise. This is one member's list of optimism gone wrong:

### • Japanese companies rush to join F1 → Rush to leave after Bubble bursts:

Formula One racing was once quite popular in Japan; in 1990, over three million fans entered a lottery for the chance to buy tickets to a race that only had 120,000 available seats. By the mid-1990s, the fervor over F1 had begun to cool... but when successful racers like Takuma Sato started to appear on the world stage in the late

1990s, Japanese companies thought it was the perfect chance to jump back in and ride a whole new wave of popularity! Toyota put together a team that debuted in 2002, and Honda, which hadn't been in F1 racing since 1992, made a comeback to the sport in 2006. Then the Great Recession happened, and by 2009, both Toyota and Honda had scrapped their F1 plans.

• **Increase in employment → Massive manpower reduction:** From 1986 to 1991, Japan was in a bubble economy. The economy was strong and growing at a fast rate - but it was built on real estate and stock values that were overly inflated. When the bubble burst in 1991, the economy took a drastic turn for the worse. It led to the Employment Ice Age: a period of time from 1994 to 2004 where companies, in an attempt to cut costs, hired very few new additional workers. This meant that most of the students graduating from college, along with anyone who had recently lost their job, found themselves shut out of the work force. It was so bad, with such a lasting social impact, that people who came of age in those years are now called The Lost Generation.

• **Extreme drop in real estate and stock prices → Massive bank liabilities:** This is another reference to the collapse of Japan's bubble economy. In those times, real estate prices were greatly inflated beyond their actual worth. This meant that homeowners and real estate companies could take out bigger loans, using the over-inflated value of their land as collateral. But conversely, it also meant that buying a home became almost impossible, due to the over-inflated value of land. In an attempt to bring land prices back under control, the Ministry of Finance issued guidelines that limited the total loan amounts that banks could lend to the real estate sector. That did succeed in bringing down land prices, but as a consequence, it also reduced the value of banks' equity holdings. (For example, if someone took out a \$90,000 loan using their \$100,000 house as collateral, even if they defaulted on their loan, the bank could still have recovered its money. However, if the house value went down to \$50,000 after the fall in real estate prices, the bank would suddenly be out \$40,000 if the borrower defaulted.) Things collapsed quickly after that.

• **Bob cuts → sexy clothing:** The Japanese word for a bob haircut is "wanren" (short for "one length"), and the word used here for sexy clothing is "bodikon" (short for "body conscious"). Put together, the term "wanren bodikon" refers to a style of Japanese fashion from the 80s where women had single-length haircuts and wore relatively skin-tight clothing, like leotards or form-fitting business suits with shoulder pads. The joke here is that the speaker (Kouji Kumeta?) likes the single-length hair, but could do without the brightly-colored, form fitting clothes.

• **Baby boomers → Getting ol\*:** In Japanese, the word that's being censored is "rougai", a derogatory term for "the problems caused by old people". In other words, Baby Boomers worked with optimism to build Japan into what it is today, and they're being repaid by younger generations with criticism and scorn.

• **No-pressure education → No pressure:** This is "Yutori Education", which has come up in several previous liner notes. The idea is that by removing pressure from education, it also took out the pressure to improve.



• **Buying land sight unseen → It's on a cliff:** This is a common type of real estate fraud in Japan. A piece of land will be listed as having great future potential... but in truth, the land is on a cliff, which has no room for growth and in fact might actually erode away. Some criminals will even show pictures of the land to the prospective buyer, but the pictures are of a different plot than the one they're actually selling.

• **Construction boom → Asbestos:** As mentioned in a previous liner note, asbestos was once commonly used in construction for things like textured paint and wall insulation. However, it's now known that asbestos is linked to most mesotheliomas. It was banned in Japan in 2006, but that was only after more than 40 years of being used as a low-cost construction material in literally thousands of buildings.

• **ODA → Gov't officials pocket the money:** "ODA" stands for Official Development Assistance, a program from the Japanese government which gave China 3.6 trillion yen in aid in the years after World War II. When the program began, it was to help China recover from the war. But as decades passed and China became more affluent, the public began to wonder why money was still being paid.

• **OAD → Kodansha is the only victor:** When this episode was released in 2008, Kodansha was pretty much the only company in the OAD game. They commissioned special anime episodes for everything from Fairy Tail to Ah! My Goddess to Attack on Titan. But they were so successful that others soon followed suit, like Kadokawa with Kamen no Maid Guy, and Shueisha with To-Love-Ru.

• **Massive additional production → Massive overstock:** Overly optimistic demand forecasts lead to a glut of unsold products.

• **Anime adaptation after 17 years of persevering → Laughingstock:** This is Kouji Kumeta's personal account of how he feels his career is going so far.

## **"HOW MANY CEOS VANISHED INTO THE FOREST?"**

"The forest" is Aokigahara, a forest on the northwestern flank of Mt. Fuji. As mentioned in previous liner notes, Aokigahara has come to be known as the "suicide forest" for the large amount of people who commit suicide there. Business owners aren't immune to this; suicide numbers in the forest are generally higher in March, at the end of the fiscal year.

## **"EVEN KOMURO TETSUYA, THAT DISGUSTINGLY UPBEAT SINGER YOU LISTEN TO, DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS."**

Tetsuya Komuro is a famous musician and songwriter. He was one of the founding members of a rock band called TM Network (anime fans might know them best for "Your Song" from Vampire Hunter D, or "Beyond the Time" from Mobile Suit Gundam: Char's Counterattack). And even after TM Network disbanded in 1994, Tetsuya continued to find success as a record producer and through his own solo career. However, in 2008, he was arrested for fraud. He had promised to sell an investor the copyright to his songs for 500 million yen - a copyright which already belonged to someone else. In the end, he was given a suspended three-year prison sentence.



**"YOU'RE SO CREEPY!"**



This final shot, with Nozomu groveling on the floor, is a reference to the closing scene in *The End of Evangelion*. The girl's last line here is the same as Asuka's: "Kimochi warui!"

## **THE GIFT OF THE PATIENT**

And this last "preview" is a spoof on O. Henry's famous short story, *The Gift of the Magi*. In Japanese, the word for "magi" is "kenja", spelled 賢者. But for this preview, it's been swapped out for 患者, which is still pronounced "kenja", but instead means "medical patient".

The original story is about a poor married couple, Jim and Della, who want to give each other Christmas presents, but they can't afford anything. So Jim secretly sells his watch to buy Della a comb, and Della secretly cuts off her hair and sells it to buy Jim a pocket watch chain. When the two give each other their gifts, even though the presents can't be used, they understand the greater value of the sacrificial love with which the presents were bought.

Here in *Zetsubou-sensei*, "Jimu" and "Dera" are dating online, and they each sell their precious anime and manga goods to buy each other gifts which can't be used. Some stories are simply timeless!